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Christian Concord:

OR, THE
AGREEMENT

of the Associated
PASTORS and CHURCHES
OF
WORCESTERSHIRE.

WITH
Rich. Baxter's Explication and Defence of
it, and his Exhortation to Unity.

ROM. 12. 4, 5.

For as We have many Members in one Body, and all Members have not the same Office: so We being Many are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another.

JUD. Ver. 19.

These be they who separate themselves, sensuall, having not the Spirit.



L O N D O N,

Printed by A.M. for Thomas Underhill, at the Anchor and Bible in Pauls Church-yard near the little North-door, and Francis Tyton at the three Daggers in Fleet-street near Dunstons Church 1653.

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Christian Concord

OF THE

AGREEMENT

of the Association

PASTORS and CHURCHES

OF

WORTHINGTON

WITH

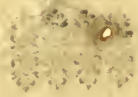
Rich. Baxter's Exposition and Deliberation of
it, and his Exhortation to Unite

ROM. 12. 4. 5.

It is the duty of every Christian to be united with the Church of Christ, and to be in communion with the saints.

John 17. 21.

That they who profess the Christian religion, being united in spirit,



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16.3.36

LONDON

Printed by J. D. ... at the ... North-door, and ...
... in ... Street near ... Church. 1636



THE PROPOSITIONS

Agreed on by the


Associated Ministers

of the County of

W O R C E S T E R,

and some adjacent Parts.

We Ministers of the Gospel whose Names are underwritten, after our seeking of Gods direction, and our most serious consultations about the discharge of our Duty, for the Reforming and right Guiding of the Congregations committed to our charge, and for the right Managing of Gods Worship therein; Do Agree and Resolve as followeth:

I.  N general, We do Agree and Resolve, not to addict or engage our selves to any Party, nor to set up the Dictates of any as such, but at present only to Practise unanimously those known Truths which the sober and godly of each Party are agreed in, as near as possibly we can, that so we may neither give occasion to any such sober and godly persons to divide from us; nor yet proceed ungroundedly, doubtingly, and uncomfortably in our Work, nor attempt any thing but what we know to be of God, and may

cheerfully bear all labour, and sufferings that we may meet with in carrying it on.

II. We agree, and resolve by Gods help, That so far as God doth make known our duty to us, we will faithfully endeavour to discharge it, and will not desist through any fears of losses in our Estates, or the frowns and displeasure of men, or any the like Carnal inducements whatsoever.

III. Particularly, We are all convinced that it is the duty of each Minister to endeavour to know (if possible) each person of his charge, that so he may know where his special duty lieth, and how to perform it.

IV. We are also convinced, That it is the duty of Ministers and people, according to their several opportunities, to admonish and reprove those that live in any known sin, through wilfulnesse or negligence (laying aside the ordinary infirmities that the most godly are subject to) and this must be with tender love, and yet with great seriousness, and with discretion; and not with malice, bitterness, or disdain, yet variously according to the quality of the person and offence. And if the offender hear not, that is, obey not the admonition, by Repenting and Reforming, he must be admonished before witnesse; This therefore we Resolve by Gods assistance faithfully to practise according to our opportunitie, and to acquaint our people with their duty herein, especially in great Congregations, where through the greatnesse and multitude of other works, lesse of this can be expected from Ministers.

V. If any after this admonition shall yet refuse to Repent and Reform, those that can prove it, must tell the Church-Officers, who must hear the case, and admonish them with Authority. The like must be done by those that have been oft admonished by others formerly, and not Repented and Reformed; and those whose sin is notorious, and hainously scandalous. But for private persons to accuse others in the publick Congregation before the Officers have heard the case, may breed dangerous slanders and quarrels. We Resolve

solve therefore to appoint some certain times for the hearing of such cases.

VI. In Corporations, or other places that have Magistrates, We judge it convenient, if we can so far prevail with them, that they would grant us their presence at these meetings, both to be witnesses of our right proceedings, and to countenance them so far as by Law they may; and especially because it is necessary that they have the full cognisance of our proceedings, before we can expect they should assist us against any that will violently intrude into our communion or disturb us: and also that they may at the same time first censure offenders according to Law, and so we may know their proof of the fact; yet do we judge their presence a matter rather of conveniencie then of necessity.

VII. If any after this refuse to Repent and Reform, or if any have sinned hainously with publick scandal of the Church, it is the duty of Ministers to rebuke such before all the Church, and to call them publickly to repentance: This therefore we are resolved in both these cases to practise.

VIII. Yet, where any mans sin is such, as to expose him by the Law of the Land to death, or imprisonment, or great mulcts, or other penalties; We resolve not to anticipate publick Justice, nor to call out such to accuse themselves by their Church confessions, but shall wait to see what Justice will do with them: but after mulcts and corporal penalties imposed by Justice upon proof of guilt, we may and must require open repentance, if the person do survive.

IX. We Resolve (that we wrong not others or our selves) not to mention any mans sin publickly (by this personal application) before we have full proof beyond all exception, both of the fact and the faultiness, and not to traduce men in doubtful or controverted cases; and most commonly we must have the parties own confession of the matter of fact.

X. If

X. If after this publick admonition the sinner shall obstinately refuse to manifest Repentance, or to Reform; it is the duty of the Ministers to make a personal application to him of those threatnings which Christ hath denounced in Scripture against such as he is; and especially to declare in the Name of Christ, that he is one whose communion the Church is bound to avoid; and to require him to forbear usurping that communion, and to charge the Church in Christs Name to avoid all familiarity with him, not only in Gods Worship, but in common conversation, further then natural and civil relations binde us.

XI. When the Church or Officers are orderly acquainted that any man is obstinate in sin, after private and lesse publick admonition, or that his sin is notorious, and of publick scandal, it is unmeet to admit him to publick communion at the Lords Supper while he is under just tryall; for while the Church is necessarily in doubt whether he be such a scandalous or obstinate sinner or not, and so whether they may lawfully communicate with him or not (being forbidden communion with such) they must needs forbear his communion for that time (till his clearing or Repentance resolve their doubt) or else they must act doubtingly and not in Faith: Yet this is only a suspension of actual communion at present (no duty being a duty at all times to be performed) and not a proper denial of his right till he be cast out. The trial of his justly questioned right, will not fitly consist with his actual, full, and present exercise and use of such privileges.

XII. We are all agreed likewise, That where men are thus notoriously scandalous, or obstinate in known sin, we may not content our selves with a meer debarring such from the Lords Supper (which multitudes do willingly forbear of themselves, who yet are taken for as good Christians as others, and not avoided in regard of any other communion) but we must proceed to the forementioned publick reproof, and casting
ing

ing them out of our communion, else their remaining members of our Church will harden themselves, offend the godly, occasion the weak to separate, and will be a scandal to our Profession, and an offence of God: We resolve therefore to discharge the foresaid duties in faithfulness, as God shall enable us.

XIII. It must not be a slight, unwilling, meer verbal Repentance that must satisfy the Church, either for preventing or taking off a Censure of casting out, but only such as seemeth free and serious, answerable in some measure to the quality of the fault. Such therefore we Resolve to require and expect that we delude not mens souls, and provoke not God by making a formality or Jest of his Ordinances.

XIV. If after once or twice scandalous or obstinate sinning, a man do once and again profess a serious Repentance, we shall admit him to Communion: But if after oft professing of Repentance he return again to wilful or scandalous sinning, we shall delay his re-admission till his actual Reformation do manifest the truth of his Repentance, else Gods Ordinances will be frustrated by illusion: Yet cannot we punctually resolve just how oft such mens professions alone may be taken as satisfactory, nor just how long we must delay his re-admission, if he forbear sinning, seeing these are to be varied according to the qualitie of the sin, and the seeming seriousness of Repentance, and therefore must be prudentially determined, when the individual Case with its circumstances is considered.

XV. Though the people have not Ministerial or governing power, yet they are to have a judgement of discretion, and thereby to try and discern, whether they that do cast out, or Absolve by Ministerial Authoritative Declaration, do proceed according to Gods word or not, and are not to obey any sentence or injunction that is contrary to that word; yet must they not on that pretence disobey or refuse to execute such injunctions and Censures without manifesting their proofs of its Error.

XVI. If people will not avoid communion and familiarity with such as are publicly cast out, they are to be dealt with by admonition, as in case of other sins. But if it should be a greater part of the Church that shall obstinately after admonition own and maintain a notorious scandalous sinner in his sin; or so far profess communion with him, that they make his sin their own, and continue obstinate therein, the rest of the Church are not only bound nevertheless to shun communion with the offender, but with them that so adhere to him, provided that it be not about lesser sins, or in a disputable doubtfull case, wherein they want full evidence against the offender: Yet do we agree for the avoiding of several dangerous consequents, before we attempt this work, to acquaint our Brethren of that Association, and hear their Judgements.

XVII. It having been the custom of the Church in the Apostles daies, to have ordinarily many Officers in a Church, and the private part of the Ministerial duty being so exceeding great, and of indispensable necessity where it can be performed, and also because it is lesse satisfactory and convenient for one Minister alone to try cases, where more may be had; We therefore judge it needfull to use all lawfull means to procure more Ministers or Elders then one in each Church, even proportionable to the number of Souls, and greatnesse of the work; and if for want of men or maintenance, there cannot Learned men be obtained, We judge it fit to take the assistance of sober Orthodox judicious persons of competent ability for private instruction and oversight, and ordained to this work, though defective in learning, and lesse able publicly to Teach, and who may leave publick speaking to him that is more able, and do the more of the lesse publick work; and that such if other maintenance be wanting, may lawfully and fitly labour with their hands: And as long as we agree that these Elders are ordained Church-Officers, and what shall be their work, there needs to be no breach among us, though we determined not of their power in Sacra-
ments.

ments, and whether their Office be the same with the Teaching Elders: Whilst we agree in Practice, we may leave mens several principals in such a difficult controverted point to their own judgements: Also we conceive it meet that where there are fit men, some be ordained to the Office of Deacons.

XV III. Because all this forementioned Discipline cannot be exercised without the peoples consent (the Ministerial power being not compulsive, as by violence, but Nunciative, Swasory, and directive) and we have at present no full discovery of their consent: And because Ministers should have a particular knowledge of their Charge, which now is uncertain, and for divers other Reasons propounded and debated amongus, we judge it very fit, if not of necessity, to desire a more expresse signification of our peoples consent to our Ministry, and Ministerial actions; and in particular to submit to this Discipline, as the members of that particular Church: And because we have reason to suspect that many among us understand not, or believe not the very fundamentals Essential to the Christian Faith, We judge it fit withall to require an understanding profession of Assent and Consent to such fundamentals, except any of us should judge that we can better exercise the forementioned Discipline without calling their people to such a profession of consent, in which case we will declare our Reasons to our Brethren of the Ministry in our meetings, and hear their advice when the case is opened.

XIX. In requiring this expresse consent, We agree to proceed according to these following Rules.

Reg. 1. We will first instruct our people in divers Sermons about the Nature of a Church, its constitution and government, the duty and Authority of Pastors, and the duties of people to God, their Ministers, and to each other as members of such a Church, and the meaning of each branch of that Profession which we call them to, that so they may not do it rashly, ignorantly, or formally.

R. 2. We shall as exactly as God shall enable us, draw up, and agree upon a form of words containing the said Profession, with a brief Preface concerning the reasons, nature, and ends of it; and we will all use the same form of words to a word, except any Brother shall think himself bound to differ in any smaller point, where a difference is tollerable; in which case we will give in our reasons at the meeting of our Brethren of the Ministry, and hear their advice.

R. 3. We shall take these Professions only in publick, and not secretly.

R. 4. We shall deliver to our people a Copy of this form of Profession that they may consider of it before they are called to it.

R. 5. We shall first receive the Profession of all them that are satisfied and most willing, and wait till the rest are satisfied and will freely consent, and not spur them on to do it ignorantly, rashly or unwillingly.

R. 6. If any deny or delay to expresse their consent, We shall endeavour carefully to discern on what grounds he doth it, and whether it be a flat denial of the matter, or only some scruple at the manner, and accordingly shall distinguish between, 1. Professors of Consent, as being members certain. 2. Or deniers of consent as to the matter, as being no members of that Church: 3. And delayers or deniers to consent to the manner, as being uncertain, or lesse certain, whether they are members or no, till they further discover it.

R. 7. We shall distinguish between Infant-members, and Adult. and for the former we shall take their Parents profession, and for the latter we shall expect their own. And though it cannot be determined just to a day or year when any is past his Infant-Church-Estate, yet none must be enrolled or accounted among Adult. and perfect members, til they personally and publickly shall make their profession; whether it be only of their Faith and Obedience to Christ, that they may be esteemed Adult. members of the Universall Church,

or

or also their consent to be members of a particular Church.

R. 8. If any at full age do offer their Consent to be members of a particular Church, and expect to enjoy its privileges, who yet understand not, or believe not the fundamental Essential points of the Christian Religion, if they be willing to learn, we shall presently instruct them as *Catechumens*, and admit them when they are fit: But if they refuse to learn, we must take them for such as refuse to be Christians; and therefore where we have just reason to suspect the ignorance or unbelief of any that offer their profession of the form of words. We judge it our duty more particularly to examine them, yet resolve that we will not refuse any for want of fit expressions, who any way discover that they understand the matter.

R. 9. Though we shall receive Professions only in publick for satisfaction of the Church, and other reasons, yet those whose knowledge only is suspected, we may examine in private; because some of understanding are not able in publick to expresse their mindes: and afterwards in publick we shall receive their profession if they are found fit.

R. 10. If any shall publickly offer his profession of Consent, who is a confessed or a convicted scandalous or obstinate sinner; We shall immediately require him to profess openly his Repentance, for his former scandalous sins before we receive his profession of duty for the future; seeing in order that must go first; and if he refuse, he must suspend our numbring him with the sounder members, and proceed to publick admonition and Censure if he persevere impenitent.

R. 11. If there be not enough in one Parish that will consent (after our sufficient waiting) we shall joyn them to the next Parish by consent; yet continuing still our meetings for preaching to the rest that consent not, and not meddling with alterations of the Ministers maintenance; yet in this weighty

case, we desire advice may first be had from the Ministers of that Association.

X X. Because all Churches are parts of the Church Universal, and all true Christians are members of that body, and of Christ; and have one Head, Lord, Faith, Baptism; one Rule of Faith and life, one Spirit, and one bond, and common cognisance of entire love to Christ, and one another; and have one Hope, one End, and must be one in blessed union and communion with Christ everlastingly: We judge it therefore of great and indispensable necessity, that we use all good means for the maintaining of this Union and Communion; and to do as much of our work as we can in concord with one another, and as little as may be dividedly, and by our selves: And therefore we resolve according to our duty to keep constant communion and correspondence; and to that end to hold certain meetings of the Ministry in Association, and that according to these followings Rules.

Reg. 1. We judge it convenient to meet in 5. several Associations at 5. several places in this County, *viz.* at *Worcester, Evesham, Upton, Kidderminster, and Bromsgrove*, and this once a month on a day to be agreed on (or oftner if need require.)

R. 2. We shall not by dividing the County, presume to limit others to any one of these Associations, but let every Minister according to his own conveniency choose to which of these Associations he will joyn himself, and accordingly subscribe to a Copy of these Articles, which shall be kept at the place of meeting for that Association; and so may any Minister that shall hereafter joyn with us, who at the present doth not.

R. 3. We shall give notice to all Ministers of Piety, and competent ability, who now are not among us, and desire them to joyn with us, and offer them a free debate of any thing which they may scruple, and desire them to adjoin themselves to which Association they judge most convenient.

R. 4.

R. 4. We shall at these monthly meetings keep up a publique Lecture for the common benefit.

R. 5. At these meetings we shall maintain some Disputations or other Exercise, which shall be found most usefull to our own edification, especially for the younger sort of Ministers; Or else meet on purpose for this another day.

R. 6. We shall here endeavour on consultation to resolve all particular doubts that arise about Discipline, or Worship, or Doctrine, which (for the avoiding of all occasions of division) we have not thought fit to make the matter of this Agreement, or which these general Rules suffice not to determine.

R. 7. We shall here also produce and propound to consideration any new point of Doctrine wherein we differ from the most of the Reformed Churches, before we adventure to teach it our hearers.

R. 8. We shall here debate all differences in judgement (fit for debate) that may happen among our selves or any of our people.

R. 9. We shall here receive any complaint that any people have against any member of our Association, for scandal, false Doctrine, or Male administration; and we all resolve to give an account of our Doctrine and actions, when any offended brother shall so accuse us, both for the satisfaction of the Church and him.

R. 10. We shall here make known the Names of all those whom we have put out of our communion; and we resolve all of us to refuse communion with such, and not to receive them into one Church who are cast out of another, except they have given satisfaction, or we first here prove them unjustly cast out.

R. 11. We shall here make it known if any member of another Parish shall offer to adjoin themselves to any of our Congregations, as members thereof; and we resolve not to receive any such; except we give here sufficient reasons

reasons for it ; as if they be necessitated through the sin of the Minister , or Parish where they live, to do it , or the like.

R. 12. We shall here make it known if there be any members of another Parish (adjoined to no Church) who desire either Sacrament from us, that we may know from the Minister of that place whether they are fit to be admitted or not.

R. 13. Those who being sole Ministers of particular Churches, do doubt whether they alone may judge any man to be unfit for Church-Communion, and so declare him ; or may publickly by name rebuke him, they may do well here to take the advice of the Association for their proceedings.

R. 14. We desire that all young Ministers, or any that are not well furnished with discretion and ability to manage those publick reproofs and censures , would do nothing in it without first consulting these Assemblies , yea in so weighty a case as is excluding from Church-Communion , We judge it convenient that all Ministers advise with their Brethren of that Association for their safer proceeding.

R. 15. We shall here consult about the good of neighbour Churches, for helping them where they want teaching , for advising them against Errors, Seducers, or Scandals , and furthering to our power the propagation of the Gospel.

R. 16. We do resolve to frequent these meetings as constantly as we can , and not neglect them and frustrate their ends.

R. 17. We shall once a quarter (and oftner if emergent occasion require it) send Delegates from all these Associations to *Worcester* (not forbidding any other to be there) where we shall hold a more general meeting for the resolving of greatest difficulties, and the more unanimous carrying on the work of the Gospel.

R. 18. We shall admit into these our Associations the neighbour Ministers also of other Counties, where no such Associations

ations are, or are so remote that they cannot well join in them.

R. 19. Before any of us shall forsake this Agreement and these Resolutions, we shall give our Reasons to the Association, and hear what they can say against it; and not do it without sufficient cause.

R. 20. We resolve in none of our meetings to go beyond the bounds of our Calling, in meddling with Secular or State affairs, nor do any thing injurious to the Common wealth; but maintain all just Obedience to Authority; and shall direct all our Consultations to the good of souls, the Propagation of the Gospel, the Unity, Peace, and Reformation of the Church, and the glory and pleasing of God in all.

Consentimus nos infrascripti.

C

THE

AN EXPLICATION

of some Passages in the foregoing

PROPOSITIONS

AND PROFESSION.

With an Answer to some Objections
that are like to be made against them.

Written by

RICH. BAXTER

To prevent the causless Dissent and Separation,
of any sincere Christians from our CHURCHES, or
sincere Ministers from our

ASSOCIATIONS.

Especially for the Satisfaction of the In-
habitants of

KEDERMISTER.

LONDON,

Printed by *A.M.* for *Thomas Underhill*, at the Anchor and Bible in
Pauls Church-yard near the little North-door, and *Francis Tyton*,
at the three Daggers in *Fleetstreet* near *Dunstons Church*. 1653.



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AN
EXPLICATION
of some
PASSAGES
IN THE
Propositions.



S I dare not undertake to give the full sense of all my Reverend Brethren who have subscribed to these Propositions, so I must intreat the Reader to understand that I have no commission from them for any Explication of their mindes, further then what is done already in their words: and therefore that you must not take what I Write as coming from them, but as my own private thoughts: and if in any thing you mislike my Interpretations, do not therefore mislike our Propositions: For it is the Text and not the Comment that is publicly owned: The Text is theirs, the Comment is mine.

Yet I thought it meet to explain some few points according to my own meaning, and according to what I heard from my Brethren in their debates; lest the obscurity should occasion the stumbling of any, that have not had opportunity to understand our intentions.

And first I must intreat you to remember these few Generals following.

1. We never intended these Propositions, for the taking any sober man (of any of the Parties whose Union we endeavour) from his former Principles; nor for the laying down of any middle way, in which the differing Parties may accommodate, by any abatement on each or any side, of their former Opinions. For we know that can be no way of Generall Accord, without a long and full debate of all differences, with all persons, or with all the leaders that can sway the rest. For if we should satisfie all that we conferre with, and joyntly agree upon some abatement of our Opinions; we cannot expect that others should be ever the more altered or united, that hear not our reasons: Or if all should hear them, yet mens judgements will be variously wrought on, according to the degrees of their strength or weakness; or according to their former prejudice and apprehensions; and much according to the inclination of their Wils, to Reformation, Holiness, Unity and Peace. We do therefore suppose in these Propositions, that those whom we unite with, do still retain their differing Judgements; And our business is but this: *To improve those Points wherein We are all agreed, for unanimous practice.* Till we have opportunity to seek after an Accommodation of Opinions, or a conviction of each other, we resolve, by Gods help, to close in an amicable practice of so much as we do Consent in. It is utterly unbecoming any Member of Christ, to make more divisions wilfully, because we are necessitated to some differences through our weakness: and to unite and associate in nothing, because we cannot do it in all things: and to fly from each others society, as enemies or aliens, because we hold some different opinions: as if we were not the Sons of one God, the Members of one Christ, nor might live in the same family or joyn in the same Churches or Worship, because we are not of the same intellectual complexion.

plexion in every point, nor all mens knowledge of the same stature. We are not such strangers to our selves and mankinde, as not to know, that we must unavoidably be of various Opinions, while we live here in imperfection; and differ in part, while we know but in part. We suppose the Apostle never expected that all the *Corinthians* should in all things have the same Opinions, when he so importunately perswades them, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to speak the same thing, and that there be no Divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joyned together in the same minde, and in the same judgement, *1 Cor. 1. 10.* We remember his command, *Phil. 3. 15, 16.* *Let us as many as be perfect be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you: Nevertheless whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us minde the same thing.*

2. You must understand, that we have no intent by this our Agreement to forestall any further means or attempts for Accomodation, or neerer Unity: but contrarily to prepare for it; being confident that no way is so likely to accomplish it, as a concordant practice of what we are agreed in, and the constant amicable association and familiarity of the dissenters. Nay some of us have much more to propound to the Churches, for Conciliation and Accord, when ever God shall call us to it, and let us see that it is likely to be regarded or do any good.

3. Much less do we take up with what we are now agreed on, as a perfect, or fully-sufficient way; as if the points which are laid by, and wherein the several Parties differ, did contain in them nothing of any moment; but all that is usefull were contained in these Points wherein we are all agreed. Nor do we intend to tye our selves to take up with these, and never to go further. But, as Christ saith in another case, *If any man do the Will of God, he shall know, &c.* So I verily think, that conscionable, friendly practising of so much of Christs Discipline as we generally know, would have helpt us to know the rest sooner then our perverse contendings have done; and would have prevented those sad effects of our Divisions, which must lie heavy on some mens consciences, here or hereafter.

4. I must therefore especially intreat you to observe, that whereas several things are left undetermined in these Propositions, and you think in the reading, that you are at a loss for our meaning; expecting that all things should be particularly and punctually determined of, that we have done this purposefully and of design; and therefore the error is in your expectation of a more particular determination then will stand with our ends. For seeing we intend but to single out what we know every party may agree to, without deserting his own principles; we must needs leave out those particulars wherein we are not agreed.

5. Understand that we have left many things to be *pro re nata* upon the emergent occasion when it comes to practice, agreed on at our Association-meetings, which we could not without many inconveniences, agree on in these Proposition before hand: Especially things that vary according to circumstances of time, place, persons, occasions, &c.

6. Understand, that though in many things we have tied up our selves by these Propositions; from acting in a way of singularity. Yet in many Points we have left each party and person to the liberty of their judgement: so that they may go *Above* this our Agreement, so be it, in so doing they go not *Against* it.

More particularly

1. Whereas in the first General Proposition we profess, not to addict our selves to parties, but to practice unanimously those known truths that the sober and godly of each Party are agreed in.] We mean only those Parties who acknowledge a Discipline, and are so [sober] as to disclaim those Principles which are utterly inconsistent with the healing of our breaches, and the Peace and Union of the Churches. Particularly we mean the Presbyterians, Independants, and Episcopall who are Moderate and Judicious. We mean not any Seekers that disclaim Discipline; nor Papists; nor Popish Episcopall Divines, who will have all the world come to the Romish Polity, or else they must have no peace. But it is only the Protestant Episcopall Divines, whose principles I
take

take to be consistent with our Propositions: And if there be any other Party so sober as to depart no further from the waies of Peace, it is such that we mean. But if it had been our intent to have laid by all that any Party will controvert, we should have agreed on nothing.

2. Where in the same Proposition we say [at present *only* to practice] we intend not that every man of us is tied from practising any thing but what is so agreed on: But that we do Agree in and tye our selves [only] to so much; but may notwithstanding privately differ in our practice, so far as we have not restrained our selves in this Agreement, and are not restrained by Gods Word.

3. The eighth Proposition leaves many weighty Cases undetermined about excluding such haynous offenders, whose sinne is either notorious, or generally suspected, and yet for want of accusers and prosecutors are never brought to Justice? and also about persons who are under a long triall, &c. But we take these cases to be such as must be usually determined according to circumstances upon knowledge of the particular case: and therefore fittest to be determined at our Meetings, when it shall fall out: and not to trouble and puzzle our selves with such Cases before they fall; seeing we cannot well make any agreement before hand (except very generall) but what will be found defective in the application. Only thus much I should advise, that if it be known that any person is guilty of a capitall crime (as for example of Adultery) though we be not bound alway to accuse them openly, or to bring them to such a confession or self-accusation as may hazard their lives; yet 1. The Pastor may suspend them and in some cases require the people to avoid them, when the fact is publicly known (though the party not prosecuted;) and give out a generall intimation of the fault, as known already; though perhaps the Evidence will not hold in Law. (As I have known persons that openly confess Adultery at home, but denying it before the Judge, come off as if they were innocent; and yet confess it again when they come home.) And I should think that such persons should not be re-admitted to Communion, till they do manifest publique serious penitence in the Congregation: but only in Generall termes

termes (seeing they are not bound to accuse themselves, so as to expose their lives to danger :) As thus [I confess before God and this Congregation that I am a haynous sinner, and unworthy of Communion with the Church: the particulars I need not expresse, seeing the Congregation may easily know my meaning. &c.] Whether it be meet that Ecclesiasticall censure, or the Magistrates censure go first, we do not go about to determine.

4. Concerning the tenth Proposition (which will be most questioned) I desire it may be observed: 1. That we meddle not with the term [Excommunication.] 2. And therefore they that say we meddle with the *Thing*, must define Excommunication, and shew that the work that we here agree on doth reach that definition. 3. Which if they do, then they will make Excommunication to be no more then this application of Christs doctrine to a particular person and case, which every Minister of the Gospel may perform: For we mention in our Agreement no more. 4. I am sure that delivering up to Satan, and the great Anathematizing Excommunication, is commonly taken to go much further and contain more, then we here conclude on. 5. Yet observe, that we here suppose the fact and faultiness proved beyond doubt: and when we speak of Ministers Applicatory requiring the Avoidance of such persons; if any think we wrongfully authorize him to do this without the Presbytery, Congregation, or Bishop; remember that we speak not here of examining Witnesses, much less giving them their Oathes, or the like preparation for discovery of the guilt. How farre people or any others may have a hand in this we do not determine. 6. Nor do we determine whether it must needs be more Ministers then one, that must agree in this, before the publique Application: yet afterward, we have limited our selves in this for Unity, Peace, and avoiding of rash applications. Though for my own part, I am very confident that it is their Errour, whoever they be, that deny the power of Excommunication it self to a single Pastor, at least, where he is the sole Overseer of that particular Church.

The Objections against this tenth Proposition, I will answer anon.

5. The 11th Proposition for Suspension, contains its own sufficient proof, as those that will well observe it, may discern.

6. Concerning the 12th Prop. I must tell you, that we cannot agree to the loose practice of those Ministers and Churches, who think it enough to keep people from the Sacrament, and never proceed further with them in way of Discipline: but let 500. or a 1000. live in a Parish without any more then such a Suspension: whereas Suspension is but in order to their Tryall, or their Reformation or Rejection thereupon. Yea they determin not, nor is it known, whether all these persons are members of their Churches, or not? Many Reasons we have against this course, besides what are mentioned in the Propositions.

7. We take it that the 15th Proposition containeth the true mean, between the Usurped Power of some Pastors, to binde the People by a known erring sentence, to go against Gods Word; and the Usurped Power which many pretend to, of Ruling the Church by their Major Vote. But how far the Congregation should first have Cognisance of the matter, or be heard in the debate; or how far the Ministers must endeavour their consent, or suspend their own actions, for want of their consent, we do not determin. And therefore all moderate Presbyterians and Independents may well agree with us in this; because its no Power that we deny the Pastors, but a Power of binding men to go against Gods word; and it is not any of their Liberty that we deny the People, but only Ruling Ministeriall Authority, which God never gave them, we must needs deny them.

8. Concerning the 17th Proposition (which many will stumble at) I desire you to observe these things.

1. That as we avoid the Titles of Lay-Elders and Preaching-Elders, so we do purposely avoid the determination of that Controversie, Whether Christ hath appointed Ecclesiasticall Elders, distinct in Office from Teaching-Elders, having no Authority to Preach, Baptize or Administer the Lords Supper, though they have Gifts? I confess my own private opinion is, that neither Scripture nor Antiquity did know any such Church-Officers: But as I so much reverence and value the contrary-minded, as not to expect that my Judgment should stand in any competition with theirs, or in the least to sway any man to my opinion from theirs (though upon the concurrent Judgment of so many Learned men that are of the same opinion with me, I might reasonably expect, that other mens reputation should create no prejudice;) so it is nothing to my

Brethren, nor the sense of our Agreement, what my private opinion is. We are not so unconscionably self-conceited or divisive, as to think we must or may reject all those from our Communion, that differ in this Point from us: or that it is a matter of so great moment, that may hinder our fraternall and peaceable Association.

2. We have therefore agreed of the work of Assisting-Elders, and leave the discussion of their further Authority, and distinction of their Office from Teaching-Elders, to others.

3. And that each party may well agree to this Proposition, without forsaking their Principles, is beyond doubt. For the Presbyterians and the Congregationall party, they both are for such Elders, as shall Rule, and not administer Sacraments; and though some of one sort, say, they may preach, 1. They say not that they *must* preach where the Teaching-Elders are well and present; 2. And perhaps it is because they would allow another gifted member to do the like. And for the Episcopall Divines, their practice and their writings prove what I say: For they have ever since the Reformation allowed great numbers of Readers in *England*, of far lower abilities then we express in our Propositions; such as never preached, and some that were fain to labour for their livings in secular employments, as this Countrey knows. And though they allowed them to Baptise and administer the Lords Supper, yet they never affirmed that they must do it, when there was an abler Minister of the same Church to do it. And in their writings they do maintain the lawfullness of placing such Reading Ministers in Chappels or Parish Churches under able Pastors. So that its past doubt, that we are all agreed, that there may be such Officers, or Elders chosen to do the work that is here expressed. And if any think it a matter of so great necessity, that we agree in our belief of these Elders further Power, as that we must not Associate with those that agree not, I would intreat him to tell me, why it is not in our Creed? or why it never was in the Creed of any Church? or whether no Church had ever a sufficient Creed, so large as to contain all Points of absolute necessity to salvation, or without which, we must avoid mens society? or whether he dare yet put it in his Creed among fundamentals, or Points of such necessity [I Believe that Lay or meer-Ruling Elders are; or are not *Jure divino*?] Or whether he accuse not the Scripture it self of insufficiency, for speaking so darkly of fundamentals themselves, as that the most Godly and Learned are not able to understand it? And whether he lay not a ground of separation from multitudes of eminent

nent Learning and Piety, yea from whole Churches, which Christ himself owneth, and will not allow us to separate from?

4. And observe further, that the Elders that we here speak of, are only Assistants to able Preachers: we do not say, that such may be allowed of alone, where there is no other to preach (though what might be done in case of necessity, I will not determin.) But if a great Church have one or two able men to Preach publicly, and will moreover appoint some sober, godly, orthodox men to help them in Private oversight, Instruction, admonition and reproof; and if one call these Lay-Elders or Ruling-Elders, and another take them to be inferior Ministers, as some sober Chappell Readers were, I would not quarrell about the notions or Titles while we agree about the work to be done. (Nor would I dare to reproach them with the name of Dumb dogs on one side, or Lay-Eldeers (as dumb) on the other.

5. I thought meet also, to tell you thus much of my own opinion; that it seems to me the best way, (at our first ordering of our Churches according to these Propositions) to take in none but School-masters, Physicians, or other Learned men to be Elders: (where such are to be had that are meet;) and for those of our Abler hearers that are unlearned, that it will be fittest first to try them in the Office of Deacons: both because the Office of Deacons is most unquestionable to all sorts and parties; and so it will avoid the reproaches of dissenters: and because the Apostles made Deacons before they ordained any fixed Elders of particular Churches; and they made abler men Deacons then any of us are; and therefore none may think the Office to be below him; and because it is orderly to ascend by degrees: and the Apostles words *1 Tim.* 4. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. together with the constant expressions and practice of Antiquity, do shew that this is a degree to the Eldership; and that Deacons have more power about Word and Sacraments, then is commonly allowed to meer-Ruling Elders; and therefore may be more helpfull to us; yea that they joyned with the Presbyters in Consistory, is the common opinion. And the danger of misguiding and dividing our Congregations by men of weak Judgments, is so great; that I think it much fitter to try them first in an Office of known Inferiority (for all confess that Deacons should be Guided by the Elders,) wherein they may be as serviceable to the Church; then to begin them in an Office of meer Power, wherein they will think their Votes to be of equall Authority with the most Judicious Teachers, and so may breed con-

tentions, or foment Errors or factions in the Church; and yet be less capable of doing service, then the Deacons are (See Mr *Noyes Temple Measured*, of the Office of Deacons and Elders.) This course therefore I have propounded to my Brethren of this Association; and they think as I do: But for other Brethren that Joyn with us some living neer 30 miles from us, (so that we have more seldome opportunities to meet,) we could not yet propound it to them. If any shall refuse the Office of Deacons, as too mean for them, they shall thereby discover that Pride that will prove them unfit to be either Elders or Deacons; and you will have cause to thank God, that thereby a mischief to the Church is prevented, which might have followed, if such unhumbled men had crept into Authority.

6. But the great Objection against this Proposition will be (by some) That we allow none to be Elders but those that are ordained, and so overthrow meer-Ruling Elders.. To which I answer: 1. These Brethren must consider, that we are forced for unity to speak indistinctly of all that are meer Assisting Elders and do not actually preach and administer Sacraments; whether they take themselves to have Authority to do more. (as other Ministers) or not: now they will confess that such inferior or Assisting Ministers must be Ordained: and we cannot now distinguish. 2. I never could learn that it is the Judgment of Presbyterians or Congregational men, that it is unlawfull to Ordain meer-Ruling Elders. And if they may do it, why should they not yield to it for peace, though they think not that they *must* do it? 3. I confess I know of no Elders mentioned in Scripture, without Ordination; and do despair of ever seeing it proved that the Apostles did appoint two sorts of Elders, one Ordained and the other not Ordained. The contrary I doubt not to prove by sufficient Induction. 4. Deacons must be Ordained that are inferior to Elders; why then should not Elders be Ordained? 5. Let our Brethren take heed lest they loose all their hold of that shew they have in Scripture for meer-Ruling Elders (I mean *quoad potestatem*, not *quoad exercitium ordinarium*,) if they once disclaim all those as no such Ruling Elders, who were Ordained. It seems then that when the Apostles Ordained Elders in every Church, and when *Timus* was left to Ordain Elders in every City, it was no meer-Ruling Elders that they Ordained, or were appointed to Ordain! 6. I confess I am loath (without more Reasons then I yet know) to give the Intruders of the Ministry so much encouragement, as to tell them, men may ordinarily be Ruling Elders without Ordination!

nation? For doubtless a man may much more Preach up and down in publike occasionally without Ordination: I mean, more may be said for it. Even some of the most Learned Episcopall Divines think, that by the Bishops allowance private men may preach, and that it belongs more to the Pastor to take care what Doctrine is taught his people, then that himself be the Teacher. And most allow the preaching of Probationers. And if you add to this that there is no need of Ordination to the Office of Church-Governing, I know partly what will follow.

7. Yet a greater doubt is behind, and that is, How we would have these men Ordained? I answer, 1. We have not determined of that: We purposely avoid the point of Ordination; because the distance between the Episcopall Divines and others is well known in that point: and we resolve not to put such controverted Points into our Agreement; lest thereby we necessarily exclude the dissenters. Our business is not now (as is said) to Reconcile differences in judgment: much less to divide from those that differ from us: but to practice unanimously so much as we are agreed in. 2. We leave therefore every man in this to his own Judgment. Those that are for Bishops, may be Ordained by them with a Presbytery, if they can obtain it. Those that are against them, may be Ordained by the Associated Pastors of that Association, the President performing the Action. Those that fear danger from the Law of the Land, if they Ordain without Authority, may send men to some neighbour County that hath Authority. Those that will not use the Name of Ordination, may yet use the Thing: which is nothing but the solemn Designation or Appointment of a fit Person to the Office, by Competent men: which is most fitly accompanied with Prayer and Imposition of hands, where they may be had. 3. To avoid some of these contests, if Deacons only be first Ordained, as I before mentioned, it will prevent the quarrels that some may else be drawn to by difference of Judgment. For many moderate Episcopall men will allow Presbyters to Ordain Deacons, that will not allow them to Ordain Presbyters. As for those that will say, These are no true Officers, nor to be acknowledged (whether Deacons or Presbyters) who were not Ordained by a Bishop; and thereupon will take occasion for a schisme in our Congregations; I shall speak more fully to their satisfaction anon.

9. Though I think few will question the Lawfulness of what is in the 18th Proposition, yet I suppose many will question the Conveniency

nency of it : Some will say, It looks like Independency to call our People to such Professions, which are reall Covenants. Some will say, We shall occasion Divisions in our Congregations, upon our Peoples scrupling and refusing it. But I doubt some will have a worse Objection in their mindes ; That they shall hereby diminish their Congregations, or lose the Peoples affections, and thereby lose part of their Maintenance. To this point, I shall first premise some explanation of our meaning, and then give you those Reasons of our Resolution herein, which were propounded and debated at our meetings.

1. Understand that we are all agreed among our selves, that our present Parishes (I mean not all in *England*, but all ours that joyned in these debates) are true particular organized Churches of Christ : and therefore that we require not this Profession as a Church-making Covenant, but for Reformation of those that are Churches already ; and as a means for our more facile and successfull exercise of some Discipline and Government of our Congregations.

2. Yet we thought not meet to put these our Principles down in our Agreements : but retain them as our own private thoughts : because being no Fundamentals, nor neer the Foundation, we can agree with those that differ from us in this point of Judgment, so they agree in practice : And therefore we have left it so open, that any man may subscribe to it, who yet thinketh that we are no true Churches, for want of a Church-Covenant, or for want of a solemn Call of our Ministers : so be it these persons, will but acknowledge us to be Churches and Ministers, *after* our publike Profession, Consent and Association ; though they will not acknowledge it before.

3. We have not tyed our selves or any Brother, to the use of any one particular *signe* to be required of the People in making this Profession ? Whether by subscribing their Names, or lifting up the hand, or speaking their Consent. For we doubt not but this is an Indifferent thing ; That which we require is some Expression of Assent and Consent : but how to express it, we leave to the prudence of particular Pastors who are to guide their own Congregations. For my part I intend to have the Names of all the Members in a Church-Book (the Adult in one Colume and the Infants in another) and that the Members shall either write their own Names in it, or consent that I write them, this Profession being prefixed to be subscribed.

4. We have left it undetermined, Whether the Consent shall be expressed particularly man by man, or many together ? and whether they

they shall repeat each man themselves the words of the Profession, or only Consent to it on the Ministers recital? We judge that lesser Congregations may be more punctually dealt with then great ones can be: But yet I should advise in the greatest, that it be not so huddled up as to elude the Intent and frustrate all: and therefore that some time be taken in doing it; some families coming in one day, and some another. And for those that we have sufficient cause to suspect of gross Ignorance, we have agreed that the Officers first try their Knowledge in private (because many cannot express themselves openly,) and when they are satisfied in it, that we take the Profession of their Consent only in publike; acquainting the Congregation of our satisfaction; who are bound to acquiesce so far in the judgment of their Pastors, when themselves hear the person profess his Consent though he do not express (himself) the Articles that he consenteth to.

2. Our Reasons debated on for this Practice, were thus given in:

Conclus. We have Reason to require (as things now stand) a more express signification of our Peoples Consent to our Ministry and Ministeriall Actions, and their Membership of their particular Churches.

Reason 1. We have now by reason of the Licentiousness and Apostasie of the times, more reason to question concerning many of our Members, whether their *hearing* signifie their Consent, 1. Because many profess the contrary. 2. We know some Infidels and others little better, that come to Church sometimes, meerly to avoid the censure of the people, or to please their ears (and this they have acknowledged.) 3. Multitudes in many Parishes will not receive the Lords Supper with us.

Reason 2. The Liberty given in these times hath taken away some other bonds, which formerly were laid on men, to constrain them to acknowledge and submit to the Ministry and Ordinances: and to obey the Church-government that was then in force. We are therefore necessitated to make use of the bond of their own Consent, and to require that it be more express, then formerly it hath been!

Reason 3. Ministers that were studious of the good of the Flock, did (very many of them) heretofore discern the need of an express consent, that they might have more certainty of the extent of their Charge then the Bounds of a Parish can give them. Only they (truly) maintained that our Churches were true Churches, without a more express Consent then we then had; and that it tended but to the Well-

being of a Church, and not to the Being, that the Consent, be more expresse then formerly : But now the Impediments of those times are so farre removed, as that we have full liberty to choose what way of expressing our Consent we shall judge best ; it beseems us to choose the most clear, full and satisfactory.

Reas. 4. Multitudes will be incapable of those publique, personall admonitions, which are in severall cases our duties, and we have agreed to perform, except they first know that we resolve on this course and in the generall do consent to it. They will take it for an unsufferable injury, to be so dealt with, meerly because they live in our Parishes, when they never consented to such a course. Nay it seems to me, that (at least as things now stand) we cannot without their expresse Consent effectually use any further Discipline with them as Church-members, then meerly to keep them from the Lords Supper, which is now so common, that it seems to them as no disgrace or penalty. As long as they are continued as Members of our Churches, and have their children baptized, and themselves joyn with us in Gods solemn Praises and all other Ordinances, and have freedom from all publique particular Reproofs and Censures, being never noted by the Minister to be avoided, they little care for forbearing the Sacrament ; we see thousands will keep away themselves without our exclusion. If any can (now) exercise any more Discipline without their peoples known fore-consent, let the practice of the Congregations in *England* witness. If it can be done, Why is it not ? They will refuse to come near us, answer us, or regard any thing we say or do.

Reas. 5. Let those that better know the Law of the Land consider, whether it be not necessary to our own peace to free us from Law-suits, that we have first the peoples expresse Consent ? and whether they may have no Action against a Minister else for naming any man in the Congregation by Reproof, and pronouncing him a person to be avoided ? and so no Discipline will be exercised.

Reas. 6. We have found by long and sad experience, that the people understand not generally the nature of Implicit Professions, and do indeed use them often as no Professions at all ; and that their meer Implicit Covenanting with God, and obscure Professions of Faith, not understood, and dark worshippings of God, have tended much to destroy the life and being of Christianity, with many that content themselves with the name ; and that nothing is more easie, then to turn all Professions, Engagements and Acts of Worship, into meer formall shews, and deny the power, and destroy it thereby : Why then should

we resolutely choose that way, that hath produced such evils, and is like to continue them ?

Reas. 7. It is evident that the end of a publique Profession and Engagement is a satisfactory discovery of mens minds, and a firmer obliging them to God and their Superiours, and to each other : that so their duties, as to all these, may be the surer performed ; and they may more easily be convinced of their sin in case of *non-performance*. Now who knoweth not that the more expresse and solemn such Professions and Engagements be, the fitter they are for the attainment of their ends ? And that which is best fitted to the end, is the best means.

Reas. 8. It is agreeable to the excellent nature of the Truths and Duties of Christianity, and the great importance of such businesses (as to the Church and the souls of men) to be as *open* and *full* as is possible in the *owning* and acknowledging them. Truth suffers most by being obscured ; and Duty, by being but superficially, ignorantly and reservedly owned and performed : And how much must the Church and mens souls hereby suffer ! God loves the most open Confessions.

Reas. 9. Many of the Separation do (on this ground especially) deny that our Parishes are true Churches, because they are not tied by Covenant or any expresse Consent into a Body Politick. On the same ground also they deny our Pastors to be true Ministers, because they have not the expresse Call or Consent of the people. Though I doubt not but this is their Errour, yet the satisfying of so many exceptionous Brethren, and the removing of that which may still occasion their offence and hurt, and the continuance of Separation and the Churches divisions, is surely a work well worth our performing, and which we should endeavour as far as possibly we may.

Reas. 10. The same want of expresse Consent is an offence to our Brethren of the Congregationall way, and hindreth our closure with them. And though some think that this is rather a dissuasive, and that we should the rather shun it, lest we should seem to approve of their Church making Covenant, and so to recede from our former principles, yet I think this conclusion is much contrary to the Scripture, and the practice of *Paul*, in Circumcising *Timothy*, in Preaching privately to them of reputation, *Gal. 2. 2.* and becoming all things to all men ; a Jew to the Jews, and a Greek to the Greeks. The love of our Brethren, and of the Churches Unity and Peace, should make godly men condescend in a greater matter then this, as long as we all acknowledge it a thing lawfull.

Reas. 11. We require nothing but what hath been the Ancient practice of the Church: that the People were used Expressly to Consent to their Chosen appointed Teachers, if not to Choose them, (yea even the Bishops themselves;) (yea that they might Reject unworthy Bishops when established,) and that Discipline was exercised before them, expressly and more rigorously then we pretend to, is well known to all that are acquainted with Antiquity. See for one *Cyprian Epist.* 68. p. 200, 201, 202. (*Edit. Gonlartij.*) and see more in *Blondell. de Jure plebis in Regim. Eccles.* And for solemn profession of the Faith, it hath been of long and constant use, as in all parts of the Christian world, so in our own Congregations in *England*, where the People were every Lords day to Profess their Faith, by standing up at the Recitall of the Creed. And the Sacraments are Seals of the Covenant: and therefore all that receive the Sacraments must enter or renew their Covenant.

Reas. 12. Those (moderate men) that are most against Church-Covenantings, speak only against the Necessity of them; but the Lawfullness they deny not, no nor the Convenience in case of liberty; no nor the Necessity of the Thing, but only of the Circumstantials, and manner of expression, and ends by some affixed. They require that the People expressly Consent to the Choice of their Minister, and that they be examined before the Sacrament of their knowledge in the Fundamentals. This differs from what we propound, but in circumstances. And I should think it more seasonable and convenient, to be satisfied of our Peoples spirituall sufficiency, and capacity for Church-Communion, at our first Reformation of a disordered Church, or in a well-ordered Church, at their first transition out of the state of Imperfect Infant Members, and admission into the number of Adult members, (and after this, to suppose their Right good to Communion and Church privileges, till it be on sufficient grounds disproved, excepted against or questioned by any,) then to try them as only for admission to the Lords Supper, suffering them to live quietly in the Reputation of Members, so they will not come to the Table of the Lord.

These are the Reasons, for substance, that were given in; on consideration whereof we resolved on this Practice: which I have therefore repeated, that others may consider of them, who else might through misunderstanding us, question our way.

Lastly, Let me add this: Our first Conclusion was only, of the Necessity (in these times) of the Peoples acknowledging us to be their

their Pastors; without which 1. We cannot know our Charge. 2. Nor our Duty. 3. Nor therefore will discharge our Duty. 4. And especially cannot exercise any considerable Discipline. But for the Publike Profession and Covenant with God, we take in it, only as very fit to go along with the former; that men might be engaged to God before they be engaged to their Overseers; and might first be clearly discovered Members of the Universall Church, before they profess themselves Members of a particular Church.

We did at the same time answer two great Objections. 1. Of those that say, The Apostles required no such expresse Consent.

Ans. 1. That Negative cannot be proved, though it were not written that they required it. 2. The Christians of those times gave a most full expression of their Consent to their particular Ministers, and to be Members of their particular Churches.

1. In that before the Church the Apostles appointed them Elders in every Church, whom they openly Accepted and Reverenced.

2. For Deacons, they bid the Church choose seven men whom they might Ordain.

3. The People voluntarily (when no Magistrate did constrain them) did continue in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and breaking of Bread and Prayer, and submitted to their Pastors as those that were over them and Governed them in the Lord: and without the Peoples expresse Consent, none could then have Ruled them, by meer Ecclesiasticall Rule.

4. Remember that all this was done in times of persecution, when it hazarded their lives to acknowledge the Ministry, and to frequent Church Assemblies; which made the Apostle *Heb. 10. 25.* exhort them not to forsake the Assembling of themselves together, as some (for fear) did. Now this is a fuller signification of Consent to the Ministry and to Church membership, then dwelling in a Parish is; or the meeting to hear a Sermon is, when either Law or Custom brings them, and they discover by many wayes, that they either know not what a Church is, or what the Ministers Power is, or submit not, and Consent not to it. Further peruse the Scriptures that we have cited in the Profession.

5. Remember yet, that I maintain that God doth in Scripture require only [*Consent signified*]; but hath not tied us to this or that particular signe for [*signifying it*]; but having given us generall Rules that all things be done to Edification, Decently, &c. he hath left it to humane Prudence to determin of the particular signe (whether voice,

subscription, &c.) according to these Rules : And herein, the Pastors are to consult with their People about the Convenience ; but the People to obey the determination of their Guides. So that if the Apostles *had* required no other signe of Consent but Actuall Meeting, yet it followeth not that therefore we must require no more.

2. The other great Objection was from the many Inconveniences that may follow ; in that it will seem so new and strange to our People. To which I answer : Practice but the Rules which we have agreed on in the manner of doing it, and all the Inconveniences will be avoided, except those that must needs be expected by all that will be faithfull in the Ministry, and will not do the work of the Lord deceitfully.

Yet observe that we have left those Brethren at Liberty to neglect this, who will manifest to the Associated Ministers, that they can better order their Congregations and exercise Discipline, without requiring this expresse Consent, then with it. Also that we resolve not that those must do it immediatly, whose People are not yet ready or capable, either through prejudice, ignorance or other impediments. *Ignatius Ep. ad Polycarp.* bids, hold frequent Assemblies, and enquire after all by Name: servants and maids, &c. must not be disclaimed.

10. Concerning the 20th Proposition about Constant Meetings, and the Rules of Association agreed on therein ; observe that we meddle not with that great Question, Whether the Ministers of one Church are to exercise a proper Government over another ? But laying aside the Question of Classicall Regiment, we only determine of what all neighbour Ministers and Churches are bound to, either in common duty to one another as Christians (as to give a Reason of our Hope to those that ask it : to satisfie an offended Brother, to Love one another, &c.) or else as Ministers ; and especially for the Unity and Peace of the Churches ; which every man ought to use his utmost skill, industry and power, to attain and maintain.

So much for the explication of the Propositions.

A brief Explication of some Passages in the Profession.

I Intend not an Exposition of this Profession, which would be to write a Body of Theologie. We have put it all in as plain termes as we could, that it might need the less explication. I had once thought

thought to have given you a Syntheticall or Analyticall scheme of it, that by discerning our Method, you might discern our Reasons for the location and order of each part and terme : But considering that the People, for whose sake I write, cannot make use of such a thing; and that the Judicious can easily Analyse it all of themselves : I will let that pass.

1. I must give you to understand, that the Reasons of our prefixing the Preface were these : 1. That our People may see the Grounds and Necessity of our Practice. 2. That we may not be thought to go on their Grounds, that take our Churches for no Churches before an expresse Covenant, superadded to all former signs of Consent; or that we may not be judged to go about the gathering of new Churches where were none before; when indeed we do all this but in Reformation of those that are Churches already. 3. That our People may be the more engaged, while they consent to our Reasons as well as our Articles.

2. Observe further, that yet we shall not refuse Communion or Association with any Church, Pastor or Person that meerly refuseth our Preface, and will joyn with us in our Profession, though on other grounds : as *e.g.* if he take our Churches for no Churches before this Profession have made them Churches.

3. We shall not therefore be peremptory in urging the Preface on any of our People (no more then on neighbour-Ministers;) nor urge them to use it as they must do the Profession : though we desire as full a Union as may be had, and therefore that none will causelessly dissent.

4. For the Profession it self, understand, that we distinguish between that which makes a man a Member of the Universall Church, (which must go first) and that which makes or declares a man to be a Member of a Particular Church. And therefore we have first put down so much as is necessary to the former (largely, as being of most weight :) and then put down that which is necessary to the later (briefly.)

5. That Faith which every Christian must have and profess, consisteth 1. In the Assent of his Understanding to the Truth of Fundamentals. 2. And in the Consent of his Will : 1. To the Relations between God and him. 2. And the Benefits following those Relations; which both are offered. 3. And to the Duties commanded, on the ground of those Relations. 4. Especially those Duties which are made by God, the Condition of our Receiving the said Relations.

tions or Benefits, and so are of flat necessity thereto. Now in the Apostles Creed (commonly so called) both these are implied in the phrase of [Believing in:] But because the great stop now is in mens Wills, for submitting to the Practice of Professed Truths; therefore we have thought it necessary (having so much Scripture warrant) to require distinctly a more express Profession 1. Of Assent to the Truth. 2. Of the foresaid Consent: the expresseness being no way inconvenient, but in our judgements very needfull

6. Understand that for the former part, the Profession of Assent to the Fundamentals, we do make use of the common Creed called the Apostles, as our ground and text; and we superadde our own, by way of Comment or Exposition. If any shall charge us with novelty or contempt of Antiquity in making the Ancient insufficient, I shall thus prove the charge to be unjust. 1. We highly esteem Antiquity, and especially the ancient Creed: and we take it to be sufficient to them that understand what it implieth, as well as what it expresseth: And therefore we continue it, and never desire to lay it by: no nor one word of it do we alter; not so much as the questioned word, of descending into Hell. 2. Yet we suppose that a full Creed should express the Fundamentals, and that all things necessary to salvation are not expressed in that ancient Creed. Implicitly the whole Profession is in those three words, *Matth. 28. 20. Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost:* Shall we therefore say that no more should be expressed? or accuse the ancient Creed for expressing more? 3. It is the Bible that we take for our present Rule, and we have fully proved both the Verity and Absolute Necessity of what we require, by clear Texts of Scripture. And if the Creed contain not that which the Scripture make necessary to Salvation, is it not as safe to say that the Creed hath too little, as that the Bible hath too much? Though for my part I will say neither: because that Creed might be sufficient for former times, when men understood what was Implied, as well as what was Expressed: and may yet suffice, on supposition that men be taught what it implies, and will profess that Implied Doctrine by it self as an exposition. 4. You may as well accuse the Universall Church, as us, in this. If they did not accuse the old Creed of Insufficiency, when the Council of *Nice* formed theirs, and the Council of *Constantinople* added to that, and when many other Councils have had their proper Confessions, as most of the Reformed Churches also have had; why should we be thought more guilty in this then they? Sure *Athanasius*

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thought as low of the sufficiency of the first Creed, as we do: And the Council of *Trent* thought it much more Insufficient, as their detestable additions witness. 5. Understand, that we are so moderate in this point, and so sensible of the mischief of enlarging our Creed beyond the bounds of Scripture, that we will not break Communion with any (I speak for my self and those whose mindes I know) who will take only the Apostles Creed, on these two Conditions: 1. So they will add the following Profession of *Consent*; without which a bare Assent will do little good, seeing the Devils, saith *James*, beleeve and tremble. 2. So be it they make it appear that it is not to hide any Heresie, that they refuse our explicatory Profession; and that they are not ignorant of those necessary Truths which our Profession doth contain. 6. If any say, We should have made use then of some other of the ancient Creeds. Answer, We have made use only of the most ancient and unquestionable; not formed by the Council at *Nice*; but by the Counsel of the Holy Ghost, and delivered expressly in the Scriptures: not mixed with our conceits, but given you in Gods express words.

7. The things that we thought should be fullier expressed then in the ancient Creed, are these: 1. A man may beleeve all expressed in the ancient Creed, and yet beleeve that there is a hundred Gods: For it expresseth not God to be the Only God, yet doubtless this is implied. 2. That Creed may be professed, and yet men deny Gods Infiniteness, his Omniscience, Goodness, Mercy, Justice, Preservation, Government of all, &c. yet doubtless these are all implied in the term [God.] 3. A man may beleeve all that is expressed in the ancient Creed, and yet deny, not only Original sin, but that ever man did fall from God and Happiness, or ever stood in need of a Redeemer. 4. The ancient Creed telleth us not that Christ is God, and therefore may be taken by an Arian. 5. It tels us not that ever Christ was the Redeemer of the world nor of any in it: nor that ever he died for sin. 6. No, nor that he died for us: It only telleth us that he was crucified, dead and buried; but telleth us neither why, nor for whom, nor for what: yet no doubt but it implieth all these things, which it expresseth not. It telleth us of beleeving the forgiveness of sins, but it telleth us not whether they are forgiven for Christs sake, or with any respect to his sacrifice as the cause; yet no doubt it implied this. 7. It doth not so much as profess that Christ himself was without sin. 8. It so obscurely mentioneth the Article of the Holy Ghost, not expressing his Relation to us, or works for us; Miracles

or any other, that from thence alone it cannot be known, what a saving faith in the holy Ghost is. I will add no more : Only, were it not for interrupting the unlearned Reader, I would here recite many of the Ancient Fathers Creeds or Principles, that you might see how we agree with them in the Point here added. One you may see in *Origens Prolog. ante Periarch.* Learned Parker (or Sanesford) de *Descensu* will direct you to more. One brief one I will venture to set down, because it is so ancient, and so agreeable to the Scripture. *Tertull. de præscript. cap. 13. Regula est autem Fides, ut jam hinc, quid credamus profiteamur: illà scilicet quâ creditur [Unum omnium, Deum esse, nec alium præter mundi conditorem; qui universa de nihilo produxerit, per verbum suum primò omnium emissum. Id verbum, Filium ejus Appellatum, in Nomine Dei varîè visum Patriarchis, in Prophetis semper auditum, postremò delatum ex spiritu Dei Patris, & Virtute, in Virginem Mariam, carnem factum in utero ejus, & ex eâ natum hominem, & esse Jesum Christum: Exinde prædicasse Novam Legem & Novam Promissionem Regni Cælorum: Virtutes fecisse: Fixum Cruci: Tertia die Resurrexisse: In Cælos ereptum sedere ad dextram Patris: Misisse Vicariam Vim Spiritus Sancti qui credentes agat: Venturum cum charitate ad sumendos sanctos in Vitæ æternæ & promissionum cælestium fructum; & ad prophanos judicandos igni perpetuo, facta utriusq; partis Resuscitatione cum carnis Resurrectione.] Hæc Regula a Christo ut probabitur instituta, nullas habet apud nos quæstiones, nisi quas hæreses inferunt, & quæ hæreticos faciunt.*

Vide & Irenæum l. 1. c. 4. & l. 2. c. 2.

8. We thought it necessary to reduce all the Fundamentals or Articles of the Creed to three heads, *viz.* the Father, Son, holy Ghost, and their Relations and Works. Because Christ himself in the Baptismall Institution compriseth all in these three: *Mat. 28. 19, 20.* And many Learned men think, that the Churches common Creed was no larger at first (as Parker de *Descensu* at large endeavours to prove; and *Lud. Crocius Syntag. &c.*) or at least that thence it had its rise.

9. Our greatest care of all hath been, to give you the Scripture sense in the Scripture phrase; that so no good Christian may have any seeming cause to scruple the Professing it: and none might be able to deny it, without plain denying Gods own Word. The Necessity of so doing is so evident, and our Reasons against departing from the letter of the Text, are so many and obvious, that I will not trouble you with them. I pray you peruse Learned Dr *Staughtons*

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Form of Wholsome Words, Sermon. 2. pag. 60, 61, 62.

10. We did it as a work of Necessity, not presuming of our sufficiency so far as to say or think that we have done it perfectly: For we judge it a work fit for a Councill of the ablest men on earth, to do it as it should be done, *viz.* that there may be no word too little, or too much, or unfit, or out of order.

11. We thought it meet to subjoyn the full proof of every word from the Scripture, that it might be past controversie with all believers. Concerning the Texts cited I must desire you to observe, that every Text doth not expresse the very words that we have put down, but all expresse the sense and summe of the words; so that I think scarce two syllables can be found that are not expressly in the words of Scripture, which contain any matter that is liable to controversie. If you finde ten Texts cited for one thing, if the words be not in nine of them, it is sufficient if they be in the tenth; and therefore I must intreat you, if you doubt, to peruse them all. And let not the number offend you: If you need them not, they are no trouble to you: Few of them, I think, or none, are impertinent: A consent of many Texts may convince more then one single Text: at least it will be usefull to have so many Texts at hand, for the convincing any others of any Article of the Faith, though you doubt not your selves. Only the particular Application of some parts of the last Branch, *viz.* [*our Consent that such a man shall be our Pastor, and that we will be Members of this or that particular Church:*] cannot be proved in termes from Scripture, but by consequence: For who can expect that Scripture should name the persons of our Pastors, or the places of our habitation?

12. As for the sense of some few of the termes that may possibly be misunderstood, I shall give you my own thoughts, but briefly passing over all the rest.

1. In the first Part, when we subjoyn [*the Father*] to [*one only God*] we do not exclude the Son and holy Ghost: for we afterwards expresse the contrary. But we speak 1. In the language of the Scripture, as the Texts cited will inform you. 2. And in the ordinary language of Divines, who therefore call the Father *Fundamentum Trinitatis*.

2. In mentioning Gods Being (which we put first) and his Primary Attributes, we apply the word [*Infinite*] to them all. And by the Infiniteness of his Being, we mean his Eternity and Immensity: (That he is not a Body but a Spirit, not visible, palpable, &c. as bodies are,

we imply or rather express in the very terme [*God.*]) By his Infinite Wisdome, we mean his perfect Knowledge of himself and all things intelligible, past, present or to come; their causes, manners, ends, circumstances, &c. and how all things should be ordered and disposed of for the best. By his Infinite Goodness, we mean all the perfection of his Holiness, Inclination (if I may so speak) to do Good to his Creatures, and in a word, whatsoever it is in God which we may conceive of in Analogie to Morall Virtues in man, which lye in the perfection of his Will (as by Infiniteness of his Wisdome we mean all his Intellectual perfections.) By the Infinite Power of God, we mean his Omnipotency, and all the perfection of that in God, which bears Analogie with the Executive Virtue in man. For as in describing the perfections of man, we must first express his Being as the Foundation, and then reduce all his Principall Virtues to the Perfections of his Intellect, Will and Executive Power; so must we be forced for our weak apprehensions, to do by the Incomprehensible God, while we can know him but in this Glass. Next we thought meet to mention his Principall Works, and Relations thereupon: 1. As to all the Creatures: of whom he is 1. The Maker, 2. Preserver, 3. Disposer: 2. As to the Rationall Creature in particular: of whom he is the Lord: which terme we use in the Scripture sense as it comprehendeth both his Absolute Propriety in us, and his Absolute Sovereign Rectorship over us all: To which Relations of his it is that his perfect Justice is to be subjoynd, and his Mercy as to the most eminent exercise of it. God must be considered as Rector, before he is considered as a most Just and Mercifull Rector.

3. In the second Part, We thought meet first to express the Disease and then the Remedy. The first lay in Sin the Cause, and its effects: which as to our loss is, in falling from God and Happiness (our true God :) and the state to which we fell is that threefold misery; Gods wrath, the Curse of the Law, and the Power of Satan. Though God hath not wrath as man hath, yet there is some Cause of our sufferings in God, which man can have no fitter conceiving or expression of, then under the notion of wrath: and therefore we must do as Scripture doth, in distinguishing between Gods wrath and the effects of it, and not make them all one. When we say, Man is fallen under the Power of the Devill, we include, the Power of Sin, and the Flesh, and the World: for these are but Satans materials, baits or instruments. A double Power of Satan we mean: both as he is the Cause of Sin, and as he is the Cause of punishment, and therefore is said to have
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the Power of Death, *Heb. 2. 14.* 2. The Remedy of this malady we have described in its severall Causes and parts, which I will leave to your observation. By the word [*ordained*] we have no respect to Eternal Decrees *de rerum eventu* : but to Christs Legislation, which is in order to be placed before Judgement and its execution, which are next subjoined. So did the Church in *Tertullians* dayes, as you may see by his [*Prædicasse novam Legem.*]

In the third Part, we thought it meet to be larger on the Belief of the holy Ghost, then other Creeds are. For doubtless as it is not only the essence and person of the Father and the Son that are to be Believed ; but also the Relation and works of the Father as Creator, and of the Son as Redeemer ; so is it the Relation and works of the holy Ghost also that must be Believed to Salvation. And if the sin against the holy Ghost be so desperate, doubtless Belief in the holy Ghost is as necessary. And indeed I fear most Christians do not understand or consider well this part of their Creed, what it is to believe in the holy Ghost. I think the ancient Creed which I cited from *Tertullian* expresseth it excellently [*Misisse Vicariam vim Spiritus Sancti qui credentes agat.*] Its like God would have kept the mystery of the Trinity unknown to us, and never have made it the object of our faith, if the severall persons had not stood in those Relations to us, and done those works for us, that must needs be known. I think *Tertullians* termes are an exact interpretation of the work [*Paraclete,*] it is called *Vim Vicariam*, because Christ being personally in Heaven, hath sent the holy Ghost to do the rest of his work on earth, and carry on his Cause, and maintain his Interest till he return, against the world, flesh and Devil, which is to be Christs Advocate, or properly his Agent [*qui Credentes Agat:*] and that is two wayes, that he Actuateth Believers : 1. Extraordinarily ; by Inspiring the Prophets and Apostles, and causing them to work Miracles and speak with tongues, &c. And doubtless this is a most principall part of our Belief in the holy Ghost ; viz. To Believe, that the Spirit which spake by the Apostles, and by which Believers did speak with tongues and work Miracles, was the very Spirit of God, even the holy Ghost, and not an evil deceiving Spirit, (which they that affirm blaspheme the holy Ghost :) and consequently that the many glorious works and gifts of this Spirit, are an infallible seal to the Truth of the Testimony and Doctrine of Christ. For you must note the order of each part of our Creed. The Father is to be Believed in as the first Cause and End of man ; and as his Happiness. The Son is to be Believed in as the only way to

the Father, to Recover man to his favour and to the Happiness which he lost. The holy Ghost is to be Believed in as the eminent Principall way to the Son, by inspiring the Prophets to foretell him, but specially by the wonderfull Gifts and frequent evident uncontroled Miracles which were wrought by the Disciples; and also by animating and sanctifying his people: This is Christs last and great witness, which must convince the world, or else they shall have no greater to convince them. 2. And the holy Ghost must also be believed in, in regard of his more ordinary [Actuating of Believers; and that is, as our Guide, Illuminator, Sanctifier and Assister against our spiritual enemies in our Conflicts, and Comforter in our distresses.

In mentioning the Spirits indwelling and working (which because they are more undoubted Scripture terms, we put in stead of *Tertullians* [*Qui credentes agat*]) we make Believers the subject: Because though faith it self be the gift of God, yet there is so much greater and more eminent grace given after faith, and on condition of believing, then the Grace is which enableth us to believe, that it is only the giving of that greater measure (and extraordinary Gifts) which in the New Testament is usually called the Giving of the Spirit: For (as Mr *Th. Hooker* and others express it) the Spirit in working Faith doth but, as it were, make his way into the soul, and then dwelleth and worketh there afterwards; as (saith he) some Birds first make their way into a hard tree by stocking a hole in it, and afterward make their nests and lay their young there. Here note well, that we thought meet before we expressed the particular works of the Spirit in Believers, to mention first the relative change of their states, which in order goeth between their believing, and their further sanctification: These we have expressed in four terms. The first in order is our conjunction to Christ as our Head, called by Divines, our Union with him. The second is our Membership in the universal Church which is his body. The third is our Pardon or Justification. The fourth is our Adoption: Where note 1. That we call not these [the Works of the Spirit] but put them in as in a Parenthesis, between our believing and the works of the indwelling Spirit. 2. Yet we choose rather to put them in this part of our Profession then the former, because as no man hath right to these benefits but through Faith, so though they are not the effects of that Faith (which the Spirit worketh) yet are they consequents of it by vertue of Christs Promise or New Law; and though faith be not the cause of them in strict sense, yet it is the condition of our Right in them. And there-
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fore they seem here to be placed, as Divines commonly do, between Faith and Sanctification.

Note also that by being [sanctified to Christ as a peculiar people] we intend first the real change, commonly called Sanctification; and also the Relation that thence follows, of being a separated, sanctified, dedicated, peculiar people. And we take sanctification, not for that first work commonly called Vocation, whereby Faith and Repentance are first wrought; but as the Scripture takes it for the following effect of the Spirit dwelling in us. How the Spirit dwells or worketh in us, we presume not to define. Further note that we describe the exercise of this sanctification: 1. In respect to the state *from which* we are changed, where we judged it necessary to imitate the Church, which hath alwaies in Baptism required a renouncing of the world, flesh and devil; and therefore (Scripture making it necessary to salvation) we think it requisite that this be in our Creed: Also we rather put in [Mortifying the flesh, and overcoming the world and the devil] then meeerly striving against them, both because the first is the common Scripture language, and because it is not all striving, but that which ends in overcoming that is saving. 2. As for the state *to which* sanctification brings us, we thought meet 1. To put down the manner and nature of the inclination it self, in the Apostles words [*Zealous of good Works*] lest any should think that the externall work is all. And for the exercise of it, we distribute it according to the Decalogue: 1. Into serving God in holiness, which hath chief respect to the first Table. 2. And in righteousness, by which we specially mean the duties of the second Table. 3. Yet we thought it necessary to adde [the special love of the Saints, and communion with them, and the hope of Christs coming and Everlasting Life] not as if we thought the Decalogue extended not to these; but because Christ in the Gospel hath in a singular and eminent sort required them, and made them duties so specially Evangelical, and necessary in particular: and the ancient Creed had [the Communion of Saints] which therefore we ought not to leave out.

Note also, that though Faith, Love and Obedience be mentioned both in the second part and in the third, yet it is no vain repetition: For in the second part they are mentioned, as they appertain to Christs Legislation and Judgement, and are required of man in order to his happiness: but in the third part they are mentioned as actually conferred by the holy Ghost. So Everlasting Life is mentioned in the first part, as given (*quoad jus*) by the Promise, and as that

which Christ will adjudge us to : But in the third part it is mentioned as the object of Christian Hope.

Concerning the Profession of Consent, note 1. It was necessary that we repeat the same things which were before expressed in the Profession of Assent, because it is (mostly) the same things which the Understanding receives as true (together with the truth of enunciations concerning them) and which the Will receives as Good. 2. I take the Truth and Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture, to be plainly included in the Article of our Believing in the holy Ghost (as I have said) and therefore we may well require that it be consented to.

Lastly, Understand also that when you promise to God, to take his Word and Law as your Rule, you shew hereby, that this Law must be studied that you may understand it : For how can it be the Rule of your Faith and Life which you understand not, nor meditate on, that you may understand it ? *Psal.* 1. 2, 3. And therefore you may see, that it is not enough to learn this Creed or Profession, but you must study the Bible, whence this is taken.

Especially remember that it is here supposed that you understand the ten Commandments, which shew you what is your duty, and also the great Commands of the Gospel, for Faith, Repentance, forgiving wrongs, loving the brethren, and loving enemies, &c. which Christ hath eminently set his signature on. All this is implied also, in your Promise of sincere Obedience. Also the duties of hearing the Gospel preached, of instructing your families, *Dent.* 6. 6. of constant and fervent Prayer, of the use of the Lords Supper, &c. are here implied : Those that promise Obedience, and yet live ungodly, with untaught, ungoverned prayerless families, and in the neglect of known duties, do but aggravate their sins by the addition of Promise-breaking. *It is therefore very necessary that the Creed or Profession of Faith, the ten Commandments, and the Lords Prayer (which is the Directory for Prayer) be learned of all men :* and it is necessary that they understand the Doctrine of the Sacraments.

As for the last (our Consent to particular Ministers and Church-membership,) we have given you those Scriptures from whence you may see it proved, that such a Consent there must be ; though the particular places and persons (as is said before) are not there named, nor will any wise man expect they should.

To conclude ; I will tell you in a word more, what use we intend to make of this Profession. 1. When any Infants are to be baptized,

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I shall expect that the Parents do both profess their own faith (of Assent and Consent) that we may see they are such whose Children have right to that Priviledge; and that they engage their Children into the same: and therefore I shall repeat to them the Apostles Creed, with our annexed Profession of Consent, omitting our explicatory Profession of Assent, as implied in the old Creed (because we would in Baptisme be as contracted as may well be.) 2. When any Person doth signifie his desire to pass out of the Number of Infant-members, into the state and number of Adult-members, I shall require of them an open Profession of the whole (both of the old Creed, and our larger Scripture Profession.) 3. At the first Reforming (now) of our present Congregations, I shall desire all to Profess the whole, and endeavour to see that they competently understand the sense of those words which they speak. I will not affirm every word in this Profession to be of absolute Necessity to Salvation. But I will say this, that I know not many (if any) Doctrines in it, which I dare say a man may deny, and yet be saved (among our ordinary hearers.) And we thought it far safer to put in a word more then is of *absolute* Necessity (seeing even that may be yet of inferior necessity,) then to leave out one word, which may prove of such Necessity; and so mens salvation may be hazarded, by the not receiving it. Yet where it is clear that any word was not of absolute Necessity, we were very studious of omitting it, desiring much in a Creed all possible brevity, that may not hazard mens souls. 4. Understand that for our Profession of particular Church-membership, and submission to our Guides, we intend never to offer it to our People, but this one time (without some necessity which we do not foresee;) it being not matter to be so oft made use of: But the Profession of our Faith for Assent and Consent, we shall frequently make use of, as is expressed. *So much for Explication.*

Objections Answered.

BESIDES what is said that way in the foregoing Explication of our Agreement; I shall briefly answer such Objections; as the severall differing parties may raise against our course, and their joyning with us.

1. Some there are (of what party I know not, except of the Worlds as opposed to Christs) that resolve they will make no alterations, nor exercise any Discipline till they see what the Parliament will establish : I think for fear of being engaged against what they may establish. And so if the Parliament will never establish Discipline, they will have none at all. If these men pray for the discovery of the right way of Discipline, it must be but as a Gentleman that I have heard of in the Warres, prayed every day that God would open his eyes to shew him which side would get the better, and that he would take for the better side. I confesse I take not these men to be fit for our Association, and therefore will not argue the case with them, but leave them to the Parliament for their reward, seeing the Parliament is esteemed as their chief Lord and Master. If the Parliaments License or Toleration may serve all dividers for the executing of their designs against the Unity and Peace of the Church, and for setting up of false waies, and yet will not serve these men (without a command) for Uniting and Reforming : It seems others are faster friends to Satan and Heresie, then they are to Christ and Verity.

2. Others (of the same nest) think that it is in vain to attempt any thing without the Authority of the Magistrate, for people will but despise us, What will they care for our avoiding them? or who will avoid them at our perswasions? It will be but *inane fulmen*, if the power of the Sword do not both prepare respect to it, and also second it.

I take these men also to be not only unworthy an answer, but unworthy to be Ministers of the Gospel; who have so base an esteem of the Gospel, and the power which they have received; and dare think that it is such a leaden or wooden Sword which Christ hath put into their hands; when both the Scriptures which they preach, and the Churches experience might have taught them that these spiritual weapons are powerfull and mighty? or if they prove at any time ineffectuall, let them suspect the ill managing of them. For ought I know these men might as well on their own grounds give over Preaching, till the Magistrate will force men to Pray, Meditate, Believe, Repent, and do every duty that they perswade men to (were it not for a more effectuall argument called *Lucrum*.) What did the poor Church do for so many hundred years, when Magistrates were against them? and yet Discipline was acted in such rigour, as would not now be endured to be once attempted? Hath Christ given you the Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven, and cannot you use them without

without the arm of Magisterial Authority? I desire God to change your mindes, or else to rid the Church of you and all such, and put his Keyes into such hands as can use them; and to give his people such Pastors, as take Christs Authority to be valid for enabling them to their work, and do not make the Magistrates their God. Though yet I shall as freely acknowledge the usefulness of the Magistrates power in seconding Christs commands, as another; and doubt not but it is a very easie task to manifest the sinfulness of their neglect herein.

3. Others Object, that we shall but disturb and discompose our people, and occasion many to hold off from joyning with us, and others to separate when they finde themselves touched by our closer proceedings: and is it not better to let them go on in peace as they do?

Ans. 1. When the strong man armed keeps the house, the things that he possesseth are in peace. Satan maintains his interest in Souls, and States and Churches, most effectually, when he can stablsh it in peace. Most sinners are quiet in the state of sin, if you would let them alone and not disturb them. The house that's fallen down, lieth still; and will you not re-edifie it for fear of stirring it? 2. Are our Congregations in a state to be rested in, or no? That is the Question to be determined. And I prove that they are not: 1. Our people live in the constant practice of apparent sin, by having and holding Communion with those, whose Communion the Scripture commandeth them to avoid. 2. This is become a Church-sin, which is more hainous and dangerous then private and personall sins. 3. Ministers live in constant apparent sin, not only in continuing the same Communion, but in neglecting of a great part of their duty; never once acquainting the vilest whoremaster, drunkard, or other evil doer, of his duty to forbear Church-communion, and his danger in usurping it (I mean personally, that he may apply it;) or never acquainting the Church with their duty to avoid all familiarity and communion with that man, nor once requiring them to do it. 4. Hereby multitudes of evil doers are not only encouraged or hardened in sinning, but also deluded to think their state good enough for salvation, as long as they are admitted into Christian communion, or taken for Members of the Church. 5. Hereby all the great necessary duties of private and open Reproof and Admonition are neglected also by our people: For when they see that they cannot proceed in it to tell the Church, that he may be admonished by the Pastors, they think it

almost as good say nothing; and so men do not plainly rebuke their neighbours, but suffer sin to lie upon them. 6. Also hereby the Lords Supper is abused, and Receiver and Giver made guilty; and judgements drawn down on the Church. 7. Hereby God is provoked to estrange himself from our Assemblies, and less to own our Prayers, Praises, Sacraments, &c. and to withdraw his grace, I do not say that this guilt lies on Church or Minister for the presence of a wicked man at the Sacrament, when we have discharged our duty, to prevent or hinder it; For it is not bare presence that makes Communion: In a moral sense it is no Communion, if we disclaim and disown the person, though he sit among us; for this breaks familiarity as well as locall removall. If I be constrained to eat privately, with a drunkard (either through necessity of hunger, or others violence, &c.) I break not *Pauls* precept [*With such a one no not to eat,*] if I do but declare that I renounce communion or familiarity with him. But when we do not our duty the case is otherwise. 8. Hereby many Ministers (that do keep them from the Lords Supper, and do no more) do give occasion to the enemies of the Ministry to say we deal self-contradictingly; to deny the Sacrament to those whom we take for Church-members, or suffer to continue Church-members year after year; and to whom we grant all other priviledges of Communion: Whenas we are as much bound to avoid all private familiarity with them, and to require the Church to do the like. 9. Hereby we do hainously reproach and dishonour the Christian profession, by suffering obstinate rebels to go under the name of Christians and Church-members. 10. Hereby we occasion the infection of our flocks, and the increase of wickedness, by keeping up the credit of the wicked, or keeping them from that discredit which Christ would have them undergo: and by suffering good and bad to have equal familiarity, converse and society; and so a little leaven may leaven the whole lump. 11. Hereby we hinder the recovery of the wicked, which by Christs means of shaming them might be furthered. 12. Lastly, Hereby we cause not only our Churches to be reproached, as having in them constant drunkards, whoremongers, railers, &c. (nay we know not well, who is a member and who not) but also multitudes of tender well-meaning Christians to separate from them, as common sinks of all pollution. *It is because we will not make that meet and necessary separation, which Christ requireth regularly and authoritatively as Guides of the Church, that so many do make irregular sinfull separations.* The great fault is in us, and we do
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but condemn our selves in crying out against Separatists, as long as we continue the occasion by our neglect.

Thus I have briefly given you some of my reasons, for a necessity of further Discipline, and why we may not content our selves with that state that our Churches are now in; no though we do keep open ungodly ones from the Lords Supper. (I speak not of those Churches that are well ordered, and know their members, and exercise Discipline.)

More particularly, 1. Some Brethren of the Classicall way may possibly Object, that joyning with us in this way, may seem to signifie a dislike of the Resolutions of the Assembly, or a Consent to the undoing of what they have done. *Ans.* There is no ground for this scruple: For we do not disclaim or condemn the judgement or way of any party, by taking up at present with what all are agreed in. A present forbearance of the use of full Classicall Government, is no rejecting it. We did in this County seek for Authority from the Parliament many years ago, for the establishing of the Presbyterian Government; and all our endeavours were frustrate. And many Brethren that make this Objection, do Preach themselves without the exercise of the Presbyterian Government. For because they live not in *London, Lancashire, Shropshire*, where that Government was authorized by Parliament, therefore they will not use it: And so some of them for many years have forborn all administration of the Lords Supper, and others administer it without any exercise of Discipline: And may not we as lawfully exercise so much as all are agreed in, as they may forbear all?

Obj. But why may not you as well set up the Classicall Government punctually as do what you do? *Ans.* We are not all of one minde; and those of us that are for the Classicall Government, do not think those parts of it which we here omit and forbear, to be of so great necessity or moment, as for the present use of it, to disjoyn and divide from all our Brethren of a different Judgement. We take our selves bound to do much for the Unity and Peace of the Churches: Besides, being many of us at a losse in several controverted Points of Discipline, we think the Amicable Union and Association of Brethren, where all things may be frequently and plainly debated, will be the likeliest way to satisfy and rectifie us in those controverted Points. In the mean time, you may joyn with us in going so far as we can go Unanimously, without disclaiming, yea or forbearing

your own way. For I think the constant exercise of the Presbyterian Government may well consist with our Propositions and Associations: part of it being indeed above, but not contrary to our Agreement, and therefore may be done by those that will overgo us, without dividing from us.

As for the Objection about the Necessity of Ordaining Elders, it is answered before.

And whereas it may be Objected, that we do allow a single Minister to name offenders, and to charge it on the peoples consciences to avoid Communion with them, which only a Presbytery is authorized to do, I answer, 1. We desire each Church may have a Presbytery, and then we are agreed. 2. The Brethren of the Classicall Way do allow a single Pastor to pronounce the sentence of Excommunication it self, so be it he have the advice and consent of a Presbytery. And to avoid all possibility of breach upon this ground, we have agreed to take the advice of the Association of Ministers, before we require the people to avoid Communion with any. Only we resolve not to do this all on the same reasons and principles: One may think it of flat necessity in a Regimentall way: Another may think it of necessity in a way of Union: Another may think it convenient to avoid miscarriages and rash censures in so weighty a case: Another may think it fit to be yielded to, for Peace with those Brethren that judge it necessary, seeing it is unquestionably lawfull to take advice in cases of such weight. And why must we needs agree in our Reasons, as long as we agree in our practice? 3. It is only a Preaching power that we exercise, applying Christs doctrine to particular persons and cases: supposing the evidence of the fact and guilt to be beyond question, we do but apply the word to the person hereupon. The Word saith that with such we must not eat, we must not bid them Good speed, we must turn away from them, &c.] Now I have neighbours that go mad-drunk about the streets sometime once a week, sometime once in three daies, sometime but once a fortnight; Where hath God made it the prerogative of a Presbytery to name this man openly? or to say, With such a man you must not eat?] Or if I have a neighbour that would openly perswade others that Scripture is a fable and no Word of God; Why may not I say, [Bid him not good speed.] Have not Pastors a charge of particular souls, but only of people in general? Is not the Old Testament and New full of examples, to warrant us in this? Take heed of crying down duty, under pretence of questioning Authority. If a single Pastor (that hath no
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Presbytery) shall all his time neglect the personal, publique reproof of such men, or warning the Church to avoid them; Dare you warrant him and answer for him at Gods barre? and for all the wrong that the Church may sustain by his neglect? If publique naming men be a Classicall Presbyterial, or Episcopal prerogative, then it will be as unlawfull for me to make so close an application, as to note out the person without naming him; for the case is all one. And then I may not answer a Separatist that will publickely contradict my doctrine: or that will step up and Preach lies in my Congregation; because I cannot answer or reprehend him, without naming him, or personally applying my speeches to him. And then it seems a Minister may not out of the Pulpit name or describe any particular offenders openly, either in the Church or elsewhere: For the Pulpit makes not the difference (nor have we agreed there to do it.) What a deal of unscriptural invention is here? tending to the overthrow of all Ministerial power and duty. For if you will prove that one man may not name or particularize a sinner in reproof in publique, I will prove by the same reason that he may not as a Minister do it less publickely before any witnesses; nor yet may perswade such particular persons to believe in Jesus Christ; which *Paul* durst do to a *Felix* or *Agrippa*.

Obj. But the offended Brother is bid [*Tell the Church*] and not Tell a particular Minister. And it is the Church that he is to hear.

Ans. And dare you say, he must not hear a particular Minister? Suppose it were granted you, that one Minister cannot be a Representative Church (as you interpret this Text) nor yet that it is the Congregation that is here meant; Doth it follow that because ultimately the offended person must tell the Presbytery or Classis, that therefore he must not tell a single Pastor? or yet that a single Pastor must not without such telling, take notice of open abominations in the streets, nor personally reprove men? Thrust nothing on the Church without Scripture. It seems I may not go into the streets to reprove a railer, or part a fray, or reprehend the breakers of the Lords day, because it is a Classicall or Episcopal prerogative to name men openly. Whether *Lot* offended in rebuking the *Sodomites*, will then be a hard question: For its like there was a greater Assembly then we have ordinarily at Worship: And if a Pastor may not do it, much less may any private man do it: and so farewell all brotherly open admonition, by any but a Classis or Bishop.

Obj. But, at least, one man may not sit in Judgement, nor examine

the evidence of the fact when it is doubtfull. *Ans. 1.* A Pastor must endeavour to know the state of every particular soul in his charge, and therefore use all fit means to finde out all scandalous sins. May not he go to, or send for one of his people, and ask him whether such things be so or not? or ask others whether they know it? What is that Question which a Classis or Bishop may put, and a Pastor may not? 2. But for administering Oathes we meddle not with it. 3. And where the case is doubtfull, we disclaim all Determinations or Censures: Those we leave as others prorogative, confessing it belongs not to us. I do not think that so high a penalty as exclusion from Church-Communion, must passe upon dark and doubtfull Evidences.

Let me add this much of my own private Opinion (wherein all my Brethren here agree not with me,) I confess I take it for a very clear truth, that one single Pastor may not only do what we have agreed in, but may properly Excommunicate, and may Govern a Church, where there is no other Governour of that Church with him: Nay more then that, I think he may and must do all that we agree in (in this point) though there were a Presbytery in that Church, and the major Vote were against him. I would willingly give you my reasons for these Assertions; but only for fear lest you should think by my reasoning for them, that these were any part of our Agreement, or that our Propositions had any necessary dependance on these.

I will say no more to any Objections that may possibly be made by my Brethren of the Classial way, because I finde by experience it is needless (if others be as those with us,) For they are the forwardest men to our Union and Association, of any others (here.) The Lord grant the like spirit of Unity and Condescension in other Parts.

As for the Objections that may be made by our Brethren of the Congregational way, I shall but touch them briefly.

1. Some may Object, that tying our selves to the observation of Parish bounds, and one Minister not to receive Members from anothers Congregations, doth hinder the free gathering of Churches, and may force a man to submit to a weak Minister, when he might have a better.

Ans. 1. Brethren! Would you have Unity and Peace or no? If you would, must not you condescend as far as may be to others, as well

well as others to you? Let it be the property of the Pope to accept of no Peace with any Church that will not wholly come up to his will and way. And you know that this is the great point which you must yield in, or you cannot have Union with the contrary minded.

2. Did you ever reade in Scripture that those were Members of a Church in one City, who lived constantly in another City that had a Church? Shew me where? yea or that ever any were Members of one Church, that lived among the Members of another Church? Shew me that if you can.

3. Doth not Church Association and duty necessarily presuppose cohabitation? Is not natural capacity prerequisite to all duties or enjoyments? Can men in the Countrey that live in one Parish, do the offices and enjoy the benefits of Members many miles from them, beyond their capacity?

4. Is it not fit that bounds for order and division should be set? And may not the Magistrate do it? And is it not done in most places, as well as you can desire? And where it is not, but Parishes are either too great or too small, get them amended as soon as you can. In the mean time, affect not confusion: turn not all order upside down: God is not the God of confusion, but of order, which he would have established in all the Churches.

5. In the mean time, I pray you observe, that you may joyn with us in this without contradicting or deserting your own principles. For if there be fit persons enough in each Parish to compose a Church, and they be willing to keep to the ancient Bounds, will you not confess it lawfull? Yea very fit? I know you will. If there be not enough in one Parish, we have agreed to lay two together; but by consent, and upon advice first had with the Association, and not too privately, lest it be rashly and unadvisedly. And can you disallow this? And if any particular persons living in one Parish would be Members of the Church in another, we have agreed to examine the case: 1. If that Parish that he lives in, have no Minister, or one as bad as none, or the person produce a just cause of his desire, we agree to admit him. 2. If the person have no sufficient cause, yet by content of the Ministers of both Churches, we deny not but such a case may be dispensed with (as if a man say, I can profit more by a neighbour-Minister.) 3. But if he have no just cause, and they both consent not, we may well resolve to forbear and refuse him. For 1. Ministers are Free-men as well as the people, and therefore every mans desire must not deprive them of their freedom, and necessitate their yielding to it. 2. In such a case no violence is offered to the freedom of a Brother. 3. The publique wellfare and

Unity of the Churches, is to be preferred before the pleasing, yea or edifying of any single Member. What confusion will follow the plucking up of Christs and the Magistrates and the Churches bounds? 4. Much more must the temporall commodity of single men, give place to the Churches welfare (which will not stand with disorder.) Should not such remove their dwellings into those bounds where they would be Church-members? If you plead inconveniencies to them: Remember then it is no matter of Conscience, but of worldly commodity; And may not I set the generall good of the Churches against any mans commodity? 5. If all the people may lawfully joyn themselves with that Church which hath the Ablest Teacher, then almost all the world must go to a few men, and leave the rest. Then *Barnabas* may be forsaken, if *Paul* be the chief Speaker. 6. And then Able mens Churches will grow to that bigness, that they will be no Churches, the Matter being too big for the End and Form. I would know this of you, May not you agree on a way to keep your own Churches from swelling too big? no doubt: and must too: some then must be kept out. And may not you as honestly and orderly resolve to keep out Members of another Parish, that are fitter by habitation to be Members of another Church, then to keep out the fit Members of your own Parish, that live among you? 7. If you may (as you do) agree among your selves not to receive the Members of another Church that unwarrantably forsake their Pastor, without his consent; and this without any reference to Parish-bounds; why may you not better resolve on the same course with reference to Parish-bounds, where you have two reasons. The parties reasons for removall we suppose the same in both (as that he can better profit by another, &c.) 8. Yea if at present there be no reason to fear the over-greatness of some Churches, or if there were many discouragements in the Parishes they live in, yet consider that the time to come must be respected, as well as the present; and you should so contrive it rather, that other Churches may in season be bettered. 9. And God hath more means then Ministerial abilities to increase mens graces: He that keeps in Gods order under a meaner honest Minister, is like to be a more humble, thriving Christian, then he that will break that order under pretence of edification. The Lord knows that I speak against my own visible carnal interests in all this: For I am perswaded, if I would have gathered such a Church out of other Parishes, I could have had so many of the Professors for many miles compass as would have made an over-numerous Church.

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But God usually chastiseth men for such disorders, and suffereth those same Professors to be our hearts-grief and scourges (by turning to doctrinal or practical evils) who break Gods order and the Churches Unity in the over-valuing of our parts. And they are oft ready to pull out our eyes, that would have pulled out their own for us in a distempered zeal. 10. Christians should not first ask [*Where may I have the best Minister, or company, or purest Ordinances ? or Where may I receive most good ?*] But they must first ask [*Where lieth my Duty ? and Where may I do most good ?*] For Gods work must be done before our own. And the saving of souls and propagation of the Gospel, must be preferred before our comforts. Yea let me tell you my observation ; The Comfort that Christians have in a suffering, self-denying course of doing good, is a surer and more stable Comfort then that which is drawn from the special advantages of Ordinances. That man that lives among a company of poor ignorant souls, and will set himself night and day resolvedly and unweariedly to teach them, perswade them and win them to Christ, till he have bettered the imperfect Church where he is, shall usually be a man of solid settled peace : When he that saith [*These are Carnal, Heathens, Wicked ; This is a weak Ministry ; I will go joyn my self to such an excellent Minister and Church, and let them alone*] this man will likely be soon saddled with his new comforts, and weary of his pretious Ordinances, and be as ready to vilifie them and turn to some other ; till in this disorder he have run himself out of breath, if not out of all appearance of Grace.

2. *Obj.* But it may be objected, that by our propounding our Profession to All our Parishes, either as being already Church-members, or at least to be admitted, we shall take in all the unfit again, and make but a meer shew of Reformation ; for they will all take and make this Profession, and so be as they were before.

I confess I hear some make this Objection ; but any considerate man of competent reason, may see how groundless it is. For 1. Though we offer Christ and Church-membership with him, to all, yet we do not admit all to be Church-members : For we admit not them that either refuse Christ or refuse to be Members on his terms. Nor do we admit all that will make this Profession barely with the tongue : For we have agreed, for those that understand not the Foundations, to Catechise them first : And those that are notorious or proved scandalous sinners, we shall first require their serious Pro-
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profession of Repentance, and promise of Reformation. 2. We desire to know what you would require of men more then we do? on Scripture grounds? Are not all the Fundamentals in our Profession? Dare you refuse him that owneth them all, as not beleiving truthes enough to salvation? And to know the sincerity of his heart, what can you require more then we do in our Profession of Consent? Can any but a true Christian make that Profession sincerely? I know you dare not affirm it. Will you devise means of your own head to shut out hypocrites, as if you had more care of the purity of the Church, then Christ had that purchased it with his blood? You'l say, Men may profess all this by rote as a form. I answer, 1. Bless God if Truth have so much friendship as to be professed: I know many Professors that were contemptuously unthankfull for this mercy, who have not so much left themselves as a bare profession of the Fundamentals, but are given up to the open denial of them, and to profess opposition to them. It would be taken for a mercy in *India*, yea in *Italy* or *Spain*, yea in *France*, if all could but be brought to an open Profession of Gods pure Truth, though with most it were but formal.

2. But I would know how you will do to know mens hearts? Will you require an account of the manner of their conversion? Alas, you require them but to delude you, or themselves, or to do an impossibility. May not any man of knowledge tell a fair tale of conversion that never had it? Is there not many a thousand Christians that never knew the time or manner of their conversion? And are there not many that do know much of the workings of Gods Spirit on their hearts, that have not words of their own to utter it? If you say, you would hear them give some testimony or signes, at least as at present, of the work of Grace on them; I answer, What better signes can they give you then our Profession doth contain? Sure I am, there is the true description of a Christian: I have lately seen a Book of the experiences of Church-members given in (its like not all at the first admittance, and its like made the best of) but yet I am sure sadly defective to an understanding eye (many of them.) Pretend not to more then your part in searching mens hearts. If you say, These are but words put into their mouths. I answer, 1. Prove that they come not from the heart if you can. 2. And are not the words of your Church-members learned before hand? Some body taught them, or they could not expresse their mindes.

3. Doubtless our way is full as strict as we can finde any Scripture to warrant us: (and we again desire you if you will go further, to prove

prove it by Scripture.) But if any Pastors will be careless in the execution, we cannot fully remedy that. Peruse our Propositions well, and tell us what you would have more herein? If any Pastor among your selves will be careless in examining Members, and admit men on bare words, you will not blame your own principles for that. I could never see but the Brethren of the Classical way do come up to as much strictness for the qualification of Members, as your own principles do require, or as you can desire them, so be it the execution be but answerable: And that will lie on the persons that manage the work, and not so much on the principles.

4. I pray you observe how easie Christ is in Scripture in admitting men to him, and taking Members into his Church; the Acts of the Apostles throughout will tell you: How suddenly after conversion they were baptized, even thousands. But with those that are in his Church Christ is more strict, and requireth that their lives be answerable to their Profession. At first he admitteth them without any further triall, the same day that they profess Repentance and Faith: But afterwards he will cast them out again, if they deny him by their works. If therefore you cannot blame us, in our Propositions for casting out the scandalous; you have less reason to blame us for want of strictness in the admission. Remember also the freeness of Grace; and let not your Pulpit sound with the name of free Grace, when your practice contradicteth it, by shutting the door against those that offer to come in on Christs own terms. If Christ question you for this, it will be but a cold answer to say, Lord, we could not perceive that they spoke sincerely.] For you must prove the contrary before you exclude him. All that ever I could hear to the contrary was but this much, All men must prove their claim to priviledges, and not put another to disprove it. To which I say, Suppose that rule had no exceptions; They prove it thus [I am engaged to Christ by my Baptismal Covenant; I stand to that Covenant; believing what is mentioned in this Profession, and consenting to what is here mentioned; therefore I expect the Church-priviledges of a Christian.] When he hath thus laid his claim, and shewed his Title, you must have something to prove it insufficient, or you must not dare to deny him his priviledge. If you can prove that there is no probability that he is sincere in this Profession, it must be either from his gross ignorance of the meaning of the words which he uttereth, or else by his wicked life; in both which cases we agree with you.

But in the name of God Brethren take heed, as of polluting the Church by loose admissions, so much more of cruelty to poor souls. Remember how ill this beseems them that have tasted so much mercy as we our selves have done : and how prone they should be to cover their Brethrens infirmities, who are conscious of so many of their own ; and how backward to uncover their nakedness, and to make the worst of their case, that have need of such gentle handling our selves. Remember *Pauls* command, *Rom. 14.1. Him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtfull Disputations.* See *Gal. 6.1,2,3.* Remember how oft Christ was accused for being a friend or companion to publicans and sinners ? and by whom he was so accused ? and how oft he shewed lenity, and how seldom severity ? and how dreadfully he judgeth rash Judgers ? and how unmeet it is that the servant should be stricter in keeping out, then the Master is ; and that man should pretend to be more righteous then God. Remember also that good Christians must have a great desire of the largeness as well as of the purity of Christs Church. Of thirty parts which the world may be divided into, nineteen are said to be Pagan-Idolaters, and six parts Mahometans, and but five parts Christians. And of these Christians, when you have counted, the Abassines, the Greeks, the Papists, of all which (with the other smaller parties, as the Coplies, the Jacobines, &c.) it is hard to say which are the more ignorant and defective ; how few are the Reformed Churches ! And doth it beseem you with this poor handfull to go so neer the quick, and to pare away more then Christ alloweth you ? One seven years converse with Indians and Turks, would make some men more charitable to weaker common Protestants while they lived. Above all take heed (in the Name of Christ I warn you) that you be not cruel to Christs Lambs : that you shut not them out for want of meer words. Experience hath ascertained me, that there are Christians that are much with God, powerfull in secret grones and strivings, and do understand the substance of the Fundamentals and much more, nay that are very able to help the ignorant, and great promoters of Gods work in their places ; who yet are not able to give a Minister or understanding friend any considerable account of their faith : Partly through bashfulness, but most through some secret natural unreadiness of speech, and disability to express their mindes. Take heed what you do with poor ignorant men and women that live well, and shew a fear of offending God. He that gently drives and carrieth his Lambs in his arms, will not thank you for shutting them out

or casting them in the ditch. I know there is need of caution also for avoiding the looser extream : but I am now speaking to you. Remember one thing more, and again I say remember it : Whether the fearfull Scandals, Blasphemies and Apostacies of Professors in this age, when many stand fast and fear God, that were accounted but common civil ignorant people, be not a warning and testimony from heaven against our over-valuing meer Gifts and Words, and our under-valuing poor weak Christians, that want them ; and yet are as loth to sin as others.

As for the Objection about our denying Church-Government to the people, I answered it in the Explication of the Propositions : We give them the summe of what all moderate men desire, in giving them a Judgement of Discretion, and freedom from all humane inflaving of conscience. If any will needs have them be also Church-Governours by the *major* Vote, there is no possibility of Union with those that hold such sandy Principles, directly destructive to the very Being of true Political Churches and Government.

The next Objectors that I have to deal with, are our Brethren of the Episcopal Way ; whose dissent I am readier to expect than others ; not so much from the distance of Principles, as from other accidental disadvantages which I foresee.

The Objections which our vulgar hearers of that Judgement do make, are partly occasioned from custom, partly from the suggestions of Learned men of that Way, who also confirm them in the former. And therefore I must here speak first to the people, and then to those Learned men that prevail with them.

Very many of the people that stick most resolutely to that party and those waies (of my acquaintance,) are such as we cannot admit to Communion with us, till they shall openly profess their Repentance of their drunkenness, swearing, scorning at Godliness, &c. which they are notoriously guilty of : These I will not stand to dispute with about Ceremonies, they having greater matters first to dispatch. But I am not so uncharitable or censorious as to imagine, that none are tender conscienc't, Pious and Judicious, that may yet need satisfaction in the following points. To such therefore I shall first speak.

The Objections which I have great reason to foresee will be here raised, are these three. 1. That we do in our Agreement in the tenth

Proposition take to our selves a Power which is proper to the Bishops, *viz.* to name offenders, and call them to Repentance, and require the Church to avoid them : When as in the first Proposition we profess to agree only on the Points that are agreed on by the differing parties. 2. That we are no true Churches, both because we are not Diocesan Churches, and because we have no Bishops, and because that many of us were Ordained without Bishops, and so are no true Ministers, and therefore it is unlawfull to acknowledge us as Pastors, or to joyn with our Churches as Members. 3. That they cannot in conscience joyn with us, unless they may before-hand be assured, that they may have the Sacrament kneeling, and the Liturgie used as formerly it hath been. I shall answer these three Objections in order.

To the first I answer : 1. They may as well say that Preaching and Pastoral oversight is proper to the Bishop (which some do not stick to do) for no Word of God or common reason restrains that Pastor from particular applications, who hath Authority for general ones. Is there greater Authority requisite for speaking to one man, then to a thousand ? or for doing that which in some cases every private man may do (tell his Brother of his sin, and tell the Church of him if he reform not) then for the rest of the Ministerial work ? If a private man may before others reprove him as a private man, may not I before others reprove him Authoritatively as a Minister ? I would know whether it be all personal, open Applications that you forbid a Pastor ? or only this one ? If all, then you shew us indeed what the fruit of your kinde of Episcopacy would be : how it would overthrow the very Office and Work of the Ministry, and not allow a Minister to reprove or exhort a man, as his case requireth. If a man fall a swearing in the Church when I am Preaching, I may not as a Minister rebuke him ? I have read of times when Bishops did arrogate Preaching as their sole prerogative (except sometimes when they saw good to permit a Presbyter to Preach extraordinarily :) but I never read of any that forbid them all open personall Applications. I suppose therefore that you will not affirm this. And if I may apply other truths to the consciences of my people, then why not this ? Is it because of the nature of the thing ? or from any limitation of my Power in Gods Word ? Prove either if you can. May I not by way of exhortation say to a Drunkard [I intreat you in the Name of Christ to be sober, and forsake your sin ?] Why may not I then say [Christ hath threatned damnation to you, except you repent] and [The

Church

Church ought not to have Communion with you as a Brother till you do Repent] and [You ought not to usurp the Priviledge that belongs not to you] and [With such as you we ought not to eat] and so to require in Christs Name obedience to his Laws? Hath Christ bid me Preach one Text of Scripture, and not another? May I require them to obey that command, *Heb. 10. 25. Forsake not the assembling of your selves together*] and reprove those that disobey it (personally) in not coming to the Assemblies, or seldom? And may I not on the same Authority require them to obey that command, *1 Cor. 5. 11. But now I have written to you not to keep company, If any man that is called a Brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, With such a one no not to eat.*] Or that in *2 Jch. 10, 11. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him, God speed. For he that biddeth him, God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.*] And that *2 Thes. 3. 6, 14, 15. Now We command you Brethren in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye Withdraw your selves from every Brother that Walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition which he received of us. And if any man obey not our Word by this Epistle, note that man, and have no company With him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a Brother.*] May not Ministers require their people in particular cases to obey these precepts?

2. Nay, *may* not, nay *must* not our people obey these precepts whether we require them or not? yea though we forbid them? Else God shall be no God, without the Bishops license. You cannot say therefore that we may not apply these precepts to particular persons and cases, for our people must apply them, or else they cannot obey them. Peruse them and judge so, *Rom. 16. 17.* with many the like.

3. Is it not the doctrine of the Bishops themselves that Presbyters may Rule, Guide, and Oversee the people; but that Bishops must Rule, and Oversee the Presbyters? So that this is the main difference that they make of the Offices in degrees, in point of Jurisdiction, that both are Overseers, but one of the people, the other of Pastors: Why then may not we be allowed the Guidance, Rule and Oversight of our people?

4. They that distinguish between the Key of order and the Key of Jurisdiction, do without question allow the former to the Presbyters. Now the Key of order (as rightly understood, as *Spalatenus* hath largely opened it) comprehendeth all that power whereby we do

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immediatly work on the conscience, and so is exercised *in foro interno*, and not directly *in externo*. Now that which we have agreed on is only so much as belongs to order, or to a Presbyter as the Ambassador of Christ, and his Watchman over the souls of those people; and it is to be no further effectual then they conscienciously submit to it, voluntarily, without external force. It is but our Preaching and applying Gods Word to the consciences of the hearers.

5. It seems they that make this Objection, would have Gods work undone, if there be not Bishops to do it. Men must not be told openly of their sin and danger and duty, nor the Church be told of their duty in avoiding the scandalous, except Bishops do it. Wo then to all those Nations and Churches that have no Bishops, and wo to those Churches where the Bishop will not do it; and specially where he will rather countenance the sinner, and silence or banish the Preacher that would reform them. More shall be said anon to this Objection.

2. To the second Objection (That we are no true Churches or Ministers, &c.) I answer, 1. I must here necessarily give notice to all that shall reade these Papers, what kinde of men they be that I have to deal with in this.

There are in *England* two sorts of Episcopal Divines. The one sort are Protestants, differing in nothing considerable from the rest of the Reformed Churches, save only in this matter of Church-Government. These (if they be not ignorant, ungodly, negligent, insufficient,) I shall heartily reverence and desire their Union; And many of them the Church hath had, and yet hath, with whom I account my self unworthy to be once named: Such as were *Jewell*, *Davenant*, and many more formerly; and such as are *A. B. Usher*, *B. Hall*, *B. Morton*, *Dr Sandersen* and many more at this day. I am very confident that we have not in our Propositions agreed on any exercise of Discipline, which is not agreeable to the Principles of Protestant Bishops to grant us; nay which Papists do not very many of them allow, where no Bishops are. If therefore any of you that are our hearers, being not able to maintain your own conceits, or objections against us, will fly to the Authority of Episcopal Divines; we must intreat you to go to the Writings of Protestants only; and if you will enquire of any now living, let them be such as our old godly Protestant Bishops were: Or else I must tell you we neither expect
their

their conjunction with us, nor shall much be moved by their Judgements.

For there is a second sort of Episcopal Divines of the last edition, and of the growth of about thirty years, who differ from us in greater matters than Episcopacy, being indeed *Cassandrian* Papists, and levelling all their doctrines to the advancement of the Papall interest; If you will appeal to these Episcopal Divines, we should almost as soon consent to an appeal to *Rome*.

I must desire you to understand thus much that you may know whom I mean. The *French* are more moderate Papists than the *Spaniards* and *Italians* are: Especially as to the points of the Popes Infallibility, and his power over a General Council; and many of them deny most of his Power over the Churches and Bishops of other Nations. Since the mixture of the *English* and *French* blood, there have been strong endeavours afoot to make these two Nations of one Religion, and that must be the moderate *Cassandrian* Popery. What agitations have been among our Superiours to that end, I will not once presume to meddle with: But (to speak of Scholars whom Scholars may be bolder with as being fitter Judges of their waies which their Writings do discover) one of the first and most famous Trumpets that sounded a retreat to the Christian world, to return (on these terms) to *Rome*, was *H. Grotius*, a man of great reading, much Learning, and a mighty Judgement to improve it; but being imprisoned in his Country for his actions for the Arminians in the great stirres that were then a foot, and having escaped (being carried out in a Trunk) was made the *Swedish* Ambassador with the King of *France*. This exasperated Learned man, by his residence in *France*, did both lie open the more to the reception of impressions from the Jesuites, who were his great familiars, and also had the fairer opportunity among those Papists of the more moderate sort, to prosecute his designs, for the reconciling of both parties (Papists and Protestants) in a *Cassandrian* Popery. To this work he set himself with all his might, publishing *Cassander's* Consultations with his Notes; seeking to draw us up to the Council of *Trent* (but not to the opinions of their private Doctors.) Several Writings between him and *Rivett*, with passages in his Annotations do shew us what was his Religion. This design had many favourites, of the better sort of the Papists, and the colder and more Ceremonial party of the Protestants. *Fran. a Sancti Clara, alias Davenport* (provincia Anglia FF. Minorum Exminister Provincialis, Olim apud Duacenses Lector Theologic

Primarius, *Nunc vero ser. Regina magna Britannia a sacris, &c.* saith *Th. White* in the Dedication of his *Instit. Sacr.* to him : and yet he lieth in *London*) did by his Writings deeply engage in it; seeking to reconcile the Articles of the Church of *England*, with the Council of *Trent* : (for so high we must go as that Council, or no Reconciliation.) How far this design took in *England*, is easie in a greater measure to discover, by many changes of later times. How far it prevailed with the Bishops and the Kings Chaplains, and other Doctors, I had rather leave to your selves to judge, then take from my word ; only I would desire you but impartially to reade the Articles that were in the beginning of the Parliament (while *L. Digby*, *L. Faulkland* and such others joyned with them) preferred by the Commons of *England* against *B. Wren*, *B. Pierce*, *B. Goodman*, with the rest of them ; And observe how they all seemed Protestants, as long as the Warre was like to prosper for them ; but since that is hopeless, how easily *Dr Vase*, *Dr Baily*, *Dr Goffe* , with many more are turned Papists (of whom the *Legenda Ligneæ* will give you an account :) But some had more wit then these, and think they may do that Party more service by staying in *England*, under the names of Episcopal Divines, a great deal then they can do by declaring themselves Papists : And therefore they rather choose yet to make use of these greater Advantages : And I confess they have very many and very great : And I take my self bound to proclaim to the Inhabitants of this Nation, this publique warning (that they may escape the danger if yet it be possible ;) and to tell them that he is stark blinde that doth not see so strong a design laid for the introduction of Popery, that gives it a strong probability of prevailing, if God do not wonderfully blast it. The first part of the Plot is, by blowing up the sparks of all Errours and Heresies, that our Churches being divided, may become odious, and so men may be prepared for a remove. (The kindling of dissensions and Warres between Protestants, let God and the Authors look after ; I will not meddle with that.) The next is an incessant endeavour to infect all persons, especially those in Power, Civil or Military, with the opinion of Libertinism, that all their doctrines may have Toleration and free vent, and their practices a free exercise. They will not yet openly shew themselves till their expected freedom be established : but if once they were sure of it, so that their open dealing would be no hazard to their Toleration, you should have them as busily running into our Pulpits, or challenging the weaker Ministers to Dispute about the truth of our Church and Religion, as

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any Anabaptists do now. For their third Plot is to get down the Learned, Judicious, Godly, Painfull Ministers; at least to take away their publike Maintenance; and then they know how great a part of the people (so impoverished already by Warres and Taxes) will take him for their Minister that will do it best cheap, and will most humour them: And then they know that one Jesuite will shame and silence a hundred such Ministers in disputation, and carry the Countrey before them in many places. And the fourth part of their Plot is, to hinder all Union of the Learned Godly Ministers, and all exercise of any Discipline, or maintaining of Church order: that so they may tell the world, we have no Church, no Government, &c. and that so by division we may be disabled from opposing them; and we may not obtain that strength among our selves, nor that interest in the people, which our Unity and Unanimity would afford us against them. And therefore I know they will malice our Union in this County. The fifth, and not the least part of the Plot is, to keep afoot a Party of Learned men, who under the name of Episcopal Divines, may keep an interest in the people, and partly draw them from Unity, and from obeying their Pastors, by pretending a necessity of Episcopacy and Ceremonies, and keeping open the breaches upon that occasion made; and partly may instill into them those principles which may prepare them for flat Popery. And I confess its a great advantage that they have for this Work. For 1. Some of them are men of so much Learning as may deserve much respect. 2. Some Ministers lately put in, are young, weak, and indiscreet, and fit matter for them to contemn, and modestly to make stepping stones to their own reputation. 3. The Gentry that did with them adhere to the late King, are under so much suffering in their Estate, Reputation, Places of Honour, &c. that no man can wonder if their minde be much exasperated, and alienated from those Ministers that were not of their Party (especially when they have weak injudicious men to be their Ministers:) Nor should any wonder if they very much value and prefer those Learned Divines that were of their side: And so be ready to hear their Judgements before others. 4. And yet more must it needs endear them to the Gentry, in that they are their fellow-sufferers in the same cause: many of them being sequestred, and cast out of their places, for the matter of the Warres: And all men naturally pity the suffering, but especially their fellow-sufferers. I scarcely know the thing in the world that more uniteth and endeareth men, then suffering together in a cause

which they think good, 5. And when these men have secretly insinuated the Gentry, what a mighty influence the Gentry will have on their Tenants and poor neighbours, is easie to be judged, both to draw them first from their Ministers, and next from their Religions.

So that, alas, it is a poor low game that the other Sects in *England* are playing in comparison of the Papists. The Plot in a word is this. The multitude and madness of other Sects must be the means to drive them from their present station. The *Cassandrian* Papists under the name of Episcopal Divines, must be the instruments to draw them from their present station, and loosen them from their Ministers, and so to prepare them for the Church of *Rome*; and then when the matter is ripe, they must deliver them all up to the Mass-Priests; and when any publique Disputations are abroad, they must give the Papists the better, and pass into their Camp.

I do judge it my duty to desire all the people of *England*, especially the Gentry, to discern the danger that they are in, and beware: and to be jealous lest their discontents and passions should betray their souls: and so lest they do themselves more wrong then all their enemies ever did them. And do not think that I censure you too uncharitably, in thinking you in so much danger of Popery. For you are but men: and it is no easie matter to break through so many discontents, enticements, prejudices and other great temptations, which any man may see in your way: I see the nets are strong, and the fishes most of them weak, and therefore it is easie to prophesie what is like to become of you, if God do not speedily shew you the danger. Yea many of the more Learned Gentlemen of your own party, are lately awakened to see your danger; partly by the number of them that are already turned Papists, and partly by the industry of the Papists to pervert the rest: And they do themselves publish to the world, what a pack of notorious ignorant, silly souls, or wicked unclean persons, those are that are turned Papists; such as are no great credit to the Religion that they turn to. See the Author of *Legenda Ligneæ*, Mr *Chisenhall* against Dr *Vane*, Mr *Wetherhouse* for Learning: all zealous men for Episcopacy; And indeed this is a great part of the danger, that very many of the Gentry are to this day, after all the warnings of Gods Judgements, so sensual and licentious, so prophane and debaucht, spending almost all their time in drinking, hawking, hunting, bowling, yea swearing and other ungodly practices (wasting that pretious time in vanity, which

the Lord knows they had as great need to redeem for a preparation for death and judgement, as other men) that it is no wonder if God in judgement do give them up for a prey to the Papists: That they that would not reduce their lives to their right belief, should be permitted to reduce their belief to their vicious lives. I can but faithfully warn you of your danger, and proclaim to you all, that the Gentry of *England* that were adherents to the King, are now under so great temptations, and so great danger of Popery, that if God be not very mercifull to them, they are gone. He that will deliver men from evil, will have them pray, *Lead us not into temptations*, you shall have them ere long insinuating themselves with you, if you be not fore-armed and resolved.

And among all others your greatest danger will be from the Popish Divines, that lurk under the name of Episcopal.

If you ask me how you shall know them to be such. I answer, If they could be easily and certainly known, there were the less danger of them. But you may see much in this one thing: All their Writings or Discourses do carry on the *Romane* Interest. You may finde in those of them that write of Doctrinals or Devotion, 1. The plain footsteps of common Popery. I am loth to name men; but I could easily shew you a great deal of Popery in divers such Books which I see much in Gentlemens hands, as written by an Episcopal Doctor. And those of them that write about Church-Government, do quite forsake our Protestant Bishops, and carry on those principles, by which they may prove the Protestant Churches to be no Churches; nor our Ministers any Ministers; nor our people true Christians: and which would necessitate us to go to *Rome* for our Orders; which we cannot have without being sworn servants to the Pope.

These are the men that I have now to deal with: for theirs are the Objections now to be answered.

They say we are no Ministers, 1. Because many were Ordained by meer Presbyters without Bishops. 2. Others were but the Bishops Curates, who were the sole Pastors of Churches. And so we have no Churches neither. For it can be no Politicall organized Church without Pastors. And therefore our people should not submit to our Guidance, nor other Ministers associate with us as with Pastors.

To this I now answer, 1. It is manifest that the contrivers of these Objections are not Protestants (in this at least.) For 1. They do

hereby at one blow deny all the Ministers of almost all the Protestant Churches to be Ministers at all : For they are none of them Ordained by Bishops, except in *England*, or very few more, if any. So *France*, *Holland*, *Scotland*, the free Cities, *Helvetia*, &c. must have no Ministers. Nay the Superintendents of *Denmarke*, *Sweden*, and some parts of *Germany*, being themselves but appointed by the Magistrate, and (as I take it) having at first no Ordination by Bishops, no nor themselves pretending to that which in the judgement of our Antagonists, is the Office of a Bishop, it must needs follow that there are no true Ministers in any of the Protestant Churches, but what our own Dominions do afford.

2. Nay hereby they unchurch all those Churches at a blow. For if they are no Ministers, they can be no Organized Churches, no more then we.

3. Hereby they would absolve all the people of the Reformed Religion in *France*, *Holland*, *Helvetia*, *Scotland*, &c. from all obedience to their Pastors as such.

4. Yea, I think, hereby they would unchristen all the Reformed Christians in all these Nations. For they say (that's their great argument) no man can give that which he never had : but Presbyters never had power to Ordain : Therefore they cannot give it : and Bishops did not give it them. And will it not hold as strongly [Lay-men never had power given them to Baptize ; therefore they cannot give it to others, or exercise it themselves.] Now if the Ministers of the Reformed Churches be no Ministers, but Lay-men, then prove where any power to Baptize is given them. If these that I Dispute with will shew themselves openly to be Papists, and plead that women or Lay-men may Baptize in case of Necessity, I shall desire them to tell me, who gave them that power, and when, and by what expressions ? and then we will compare a Presbyters power to Ordain, with a Lay-mans power to Baptize, and try with them, which hath the clearer Commission. In the mean time, it beseems not me to spend time on this Question, while the whole Army of the Learned Protestant Divines (Bishops and others) who have written against the Papists in this point, remain so much unanswered.

5. Yea hereby they would make the Praises, publique Worship, and Sacramental Administrations proper to the Ministry, to be all meer Nullities : and so God hath no Ministerial service in any of our Churches ! O happy *Rome* ! O miserable Reformed Churches, if all or any of this be true.

6. What

6. What if these few Bishops that are left in *England* were dead, or what if they die before any other be ordained in their rooms? Why then we must go to some other Churches (say they) for help. But what other Churches can we go to that hath Bishops but *Rome*? And who knows not that if we would seek to *Rome* for Orders, that we cannot obtain it without swearing to be true to the Pope, and the doctrine of the Council of *Trent*, and causing all our charge to be true to them to the death, and this with a *Spondeo, Voveo ac Juror, sic me Deus adjuvet & hac sancta Evangelia*: as the *Trent* Creed concludeth. Are not these think you zealous Protestants?

7. And if our Princes be of the minde as all Reforming Princes hitherto have been, to forbid all dependance on *Rome*, and seeking thither for Orders, as accounting it dangerous that their subjects should have so much dependance on forreign Powers, what shall we do for Ordination then?

8. It seems by these men, if these few Bishops were dead without successors, the Church of Christ, at least in *England*, were extinct. For if *Rome* be a true Church (which I deny not, without distinction) yet it is easie to prove that we may not lawfully take their Ordination on their terms: and then it seems the Church of *England* dependeth on these few men for its Being to the worlds end, in all likelihood. O what a rash thing it was to imprison *Wren* for Excommunicating, Suspending or Depriving, Censuring, Silencing, fifty Godly painfull Ministers in two years in *Normich* Diocess, for not reading the Book for Dancing on the Lords daies, For using conceived Prayer before and after Sermon, For not reading the Service at the Altar, and such like: And for expelling three thousand persons with their families into other Lands, by such dealings, with many the like courses! How rashly did they accuse *B. Pierce* for such like practices, and putting down Ministers and Preaching, till he thanked God that he had not a Lecture in his Diocess, alledging that though there was need of Preaching in the Infancy of the Church, yet now there was no such need; suspending Ministers for Preaching on Market daies; and did so effectually put down all afternoon Sermons on the Lords daies, that he suspended him that Preached but a Funeral Sermon; and put the Minister to Penance that did but explain the Church Catechism, saying that was as bad as Preaching, and charging them that they ask no Questions, nor receive any Answers from the people, but such as were contained in the Catechism in the Service Book; and putting the Church-Wardens to Penance for not Presenting

Presenting them that did otherwise; yea commanding that the common Service should not be too long, that the people might not be hindered from their Recreations at the Wakes: yea punishing a Minister for Preaching on a Text in *Jonas* of fasting, weeping and mourning, on the Wakes day, telling him his Text was scandalous to the Wakes. (And all these they lay upon the King, as being his Will.) But what should I tell a people of these things that have felt them. Had the Parliament known that it might lie in these mens hands, whether *England* shall ever (in likelihood) have Ministers more, or whether ever Christ shall have a Church in *England* more or not; Yea whether ever he shall have any Ministerial Worship, or one person Baptized into Christ; it might have seemed more wit to have let them crucifie the present Church, then extinguish our hopes for ever. Now when honest B. *Usser*, *Hall*, and one or two more are dead, the Parliament must go to the Tower to intreat these prisoners, that Christ may once more have a Church in *England*; but if they prove as dogged as they were wont to be, the Church is extinct, there is no probable remedy; our children cannot be Christened again for ever, because no man without a Bishop can Authorise a Minister to do it.

9. But suppose we could send to *Prefster John*, and prevail with him for some Bishops (when the vast Kingdom of *Nubia* that was nearer him could not borrow some Preachers to save the life of gasping Christianity, but it was extinct for want of them;) Yet, alas, how is it possible that we in *England* could be sure that their Bishops were rightly Ordained, having their power from Generation to Generation by a succession of lawfully Ordained Bishops? Yea if we could get some but from *Russia* or *Constantinople*, our difficulty were insuperable. But I beleve these Objectors would not have us to go so far, but rather stoop to *Romes* conditions.

10. But, have not Councils determined, That the Ordination shall be Null which a Bishop makes out of his own Diocess? *Concil. Antioch. Can. 13. & 22.* and then our cure is yet more difficult.

11. But what need I tell an *English* man that these Objectors are not sons of the Church of *England*, what ever they pretend, when the world knows that the Church of *England* took him to be a true Minister that was Ordained in *France*, *Holland*, *Scotland*, *Geneva*, *Heidelberg*, &c. by meer Presbyters without a Bishop? The world knows that we did not Ordain those again that were so Ordained; no more then we baptized those again that were there baptized. The world

world knows that we gave them the right hand of Fellowship as true Churches of Christ, when we set light by *Rome*. And must those now be Sons and Doctors of the Church of *England* that would persuade the poor people, that they are no Pastors that are not Ordained by Bishops?

12. If yet the matter be not clear, let me intreat you to peruse the Writings of the most zealous defenders of Episcopacy in the Church of *England*, and see whether they did not defend the truth of those Churches and Ministers callings that have no Bishops; and the Pastorall Offices there performed of Ministers in Guiding their Flocks (though they think it were better if they had Bishops.) I will not send you to *Chamier*, *Param*, *Sadeel*, or any of our forreign Divines, who in their Writings against *Bellarmino* and other Papists debate this Question, because they are known to be defenders of their own Churches. Nor will I mention *Whitakers*, *Reignolds*, or any the most Learned Doctors of our Universities, who are suspected to be no great friends to Episcopacy: But those that are past all such suspicion I will cite; (yet not many, as not standing with my necessary brevity, and being in a known case.)

1. Doctor *Field* the Learned Dean of *Glocester* in his 3. li. of the Church, & c. 39. handleth this very point of purpose against the Papists, whom he brings in thus arguing [By this note it is easie to prove that the Reformed Churches are not the true Churches of God. It can be no Church that hath no Minister: and *Cypr.* saith, the Church is nothing else but *Plebs Episcopo adunata*. But among the Protestants there is no Ministry; Therefore no Church.] Dr. *Field* answers [The *minor* we deny, &c.] Yea when they further Object, p. 155. [Whatsoever may be said of those places where Bishops did Ordain, yet in many other places none but Presbyters did impose hands, all which Ordinations are clearly void, and so by consequent many of the pretended Reformed Churches, as *France*, &c. have no Ministry at all.] To this the Doctor answers at large: and distinguishing between 1. Election of the person. 2. Ordination in generall to the Ministry. 3. The assigning to a man that portion of Gods people, which he is to take care of, who *must be directed by him* in things that pertain to the hope of salvation,] he adds [This particular assignation giveth to them that had only the power of order before, the power of Jurisdiction also, over the persons of men.] (So the Presbyters have power of Jurisdiction he thinks.) Next he addes, [p. 157. Whereby it is most evident that that wherein a Bishop ex-

celleth a Presbyter, is not a distinct power of Order, but an eminency and dignity only, specially yielded to one above all the rest of the same Rank for order sake, and to preserve the unity and peace of the Church: Hence it followeth that many things which in some cases Presbyters may lawfully do, are peculiarly reserved unto Bishops, as *Hierom* noteth; *Potius ad honorem Sacerdotij, quam ad legis necessitatem*; rather for the honour of their Ministry, then the necessity of any law, and therefore we reade that Presbyters in some places, and at some times did impose hands; and confirm such as were baptized: which when *Gregory* Bishop of *Rome* would wholly have forbidden, there was so great exception taken to him for it, that he left it free again. And who knoweth not, that all Presbyters in cases of necessity may absolve and reconcile penitents; a thing in ordinary course appropriated unto Bishops: And why not by the same reason Ordain Presbyters and Deacons in cases of like necessity? for seeing the cause why they are forbidden to do these acts is, because to Bishops ordinarily the care of all Churches is committed, and to them in all reason the Ordination of such as must serve in the Church pertaineth, that have the chief care of the Church, and have Churches wherein to imploy them; which only Bishops have as long as they retain their standing; and not Presbyters, being but Assistants to Bishops in their Churches. If they become enemies to God and true Religion, in case of such necessity, as the care of Government of the Church is devolved to the Presbyters remaining Catholique, and being of a better spirit: so the duty of Ordaining such as are to assist or succeed them in the Work of the Ministry, pertains to them likewise. For if the power of Order, and Authority to intermeddle in things pertaining to Gods service, be the same in all Presbyters, and that they be limited in the execution of it, only for order sake, so that in case of necessity every of them may baptize and confirm them whom they have baptized, absolve and reconcile penitents, and do all those other acts, which regularly are appropriated unto the Bishop alone; there is no reason to be given, but that (in case of necessity, wherein all Bishops were extinguished by death, or being fallen into heresie, should refuse to Ordain any to serve God in his true Worship) Presbyters as they may do all other acts, whatsoever special challenge Bishops in ordinary course make unto them, might do this also.

Who then dare condemn all those worthy Ministers of God that were ordained by Presbyters in sundry Churches of the world at such

times

times as Bishops in those parts where they lived opposed themselves against the truth of God, and persecuted such as professed it? Surely the best Learned in the Church of *Rome*, in former times durst not pronounce all Ordinations of this nature to be void. For not only *Armachanus* a very Learned and worthy Bishop, but as it appears by *Alexander of Hales*, many Learned men in his time and before, were of opinion that in some cases, and at some times, Presbyters may give Orders, and that their Ordinations are of force, though to do so, not being urged by extream necessity, cannot be excused from over-great boldness and presumption; neither should it seem so strange to our adversaries that the power of Ordination should at some times be yielded unto Presbyters, seeing their *Chorepiscopi, suffragans* or titular Bishops that live in the Diocess and Churches of other Bishops, and are no Bishops according to the old course of Discipline, do daily in the Romish Church both Confirm children and give Orders.

All that may be alledged out of Fathers for proof of the contrary, may be reduced to two heads. For first, whereas they make all such Ordinations void as are made by Presbyters, it is to be understood according to the strictness of the Canons in use in their time, and not absolutely in the nature of the thing; which appears in that they likewise make all Ordinations *sine titulo* to be void: all Ordinations of Bishops, ordained by fewer then three Bishops with the Metropolitane: all Ordinations of Presbyters by Bishops out of their own Churches without special leave: Whereas I am well assured the Romanists will not pronounce any of these to be void, though the parties so doing are not excusable from all fault. Secondly, Their sayings are to be understood regularly not without exception of some special cases that may fall out.

Thus then we see the Objection, which our adversaries took to be unanswerable, is abundantly answered out of the grounds of their own Schoolmen, the opinion of many singularly learned amongst them, and their own daily practice, in that *Chorepiscopi* or *Suffragans*, as they call them, being not Bishops, but only Presbyters whatsoever they pretend, and forbidden by all old Canons to meddle in Ordination, yet do daily with good allowance of the *Roman* Church, Ordain Presbyters and Deacons, confirm (with imposition of hands) those that are baptized, and do all other Episcopal acts whiles their great Bishops Lord it like Princes in all temporal ease and worldly bravery.

(I will adde his Answer to the next Objection, because it is to the same purpose with theirs that now tell us we are not lawfull Ministers, we are wrongfully put into other mens places by Sequestrators: Thus therefore Dr *Field* proceedeth) [The next thing they Object against us is, that our first Ministers, what Authority soever they had that Ordained them, yet had no lawfull Ordination, because they were not Ordained and placed in void places, but intruded into Churches that had lawfull Bishops at the time of those pretended Ordinations; and consequently, did not succeed but incroach upon other mens right. To this we answer, that the Church is left void, either by the death, resignation, deprivation, or the peoples desertion and forsaking him that did precede: in some places, our first Bishops and Pastors found Churches void by death, in some by voluntary relinquishment, in some by deprivation, and in some by desertion, in that the people, or at least that part of the people that adhered to the Catholique verity who have power to choose their Pastor, to admit the worthy and refuse the unworthy, did forsake the former that were Wolves and not Pastors, and submitted themselves to those of a better spirit. Of the three first kindes of voidance there can be no question; of this fourth there may: and therefore I will prove it by sufficient authority and strength of reason.

Cyprian, *Cecilius*, *Polycarpus*, and other Bishops writing to the Clergy, and people of the Churches in *Spain*, whereof *Basilides* and *Martialis* were Bishops, who fell in time of persecution, denied the Faith, and defiled themselves with idolatry, perswade them to separate themselves from those Bishops, assuring them that the people being holy, Religious, fearing God, and obeying his Laws, may and ought to separate themselves from impious and wicked Bishops, and not to communicate with them in the matters of Gods service,

Quando ipsa plebs maximè habeat potestatem, vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes vel indignos recusandi; that is, seeing the people have authority to choose the worthy and refuse the unworthy. And *Occam* to the same purpose saith on this sort, *Si Papa & maximè celebres Episcopi incidant in hæresin, ad Catholicos devoluta est potestas omnis judicandi*; If the Pope and the principall Bishops of the Christian world do fall to Heresie, the power of all Ecclesiasticall judgement is devolved to the inferiour Clergy and people remaining Catholique.

This opinion of *Cyprian* and the rest, if our adversaries shall dislike or except against, may easily be confirmed by demonstration of reason:

reason: For if it do fall out, that the Bishops, and a great part of the people fall into Errour, Heresie and Superstition, I think our adversaries will not deny, but that the rest are bound to maintain and uphold the ancient verity; who being not so many, nor so mighty, as to be able to eject those wicked ones by a formall course of Judicall proceeding, what other thing is there left unto them, but either to consent to their impieties, which they may not do, or to separate themselves, which is the thing our adversaries except against in the people of our time. Now having separated themselves from their former supposed and pretended Pastors, what remaineth, but that they make choise of new to be Ordained and set over them; if not by the concurrence of such and so many, as the strictness of the Canon doth ordinarily require to concur in Ordinations, yet by such as in cases of necessity, by all rules of equity are warranted to perform the same.] Thus far Dr *Field*.

I finde transcribing will make these Papers more tedious then I intended, and therefore I will forbear most of the rest, which else I would adjoyn.

2. The same Vindication of the Reformed Churches, and the Ordination of their Ministers without Bishops, you may finde in that Learned Godly man, B. *Downname*, and that in his very Writings for Bishops, the strongest for Episcopacy that ever I saw (not excepting the late ones) and very passionate against the opposers of Episcopacy. See his Consecr. Sermon and Defence of it, li. 3. c. 4. pag. 108. In the last he writes thus: [Out of a Christian and charitable desire to preserve the credit of such Reformed Churches as have no Bishops, I endeavoured to prevent the Objections of Papists, (mark who are the Objectors) who reason thus against them: The right of Ordination being peculiar to Bishops, it followeth, that where is no Bishop there is no Ordination: Where is no Ordination there are no Ministers: Where are no Ministers, there is no Church. I answered that although ordinary right of Ordination belongeth to Bishops in the judgement of the ancient Church; that yet it was not to be understood, as so appropriating it to them, as that extraordinarily, and in case of necessity it might not be lawfull for Presbyters to Ordain; and much less teaching absolutely a Nullity of the Ordination which is performed without a Bishop, which Answer I confirmed by divers Reasons (see them.) Whereunto I now adde, that there seemeth to be the like reasons for the Imposition of Hands, in Confirmation of the baptized, in the reconciliation of publique penitents, as in the

Ordination of Ministers. But although the two former were reserved as well as the third to the Bishop, yet extraordinarily, in the case of Necessity, and in the want or absence of the Bishop, the ancient Church held it lawfull for Ministers to Impose hands either for the Confirming of parties baptized, or for reconciliation of the penitents. The former is testified by *Ambrose* in *Eph. 4.* & *Augustine* *qu.ex Vet. & No. Test. mixt. q. 101.* The later by *Cyprian*, *l. 3. Ep. 17.* and divers Councils, *Conc. Carth. græc. c. 43. Carth. 2. c. 4. Com. Aransic. c. 2.* And the Popish Writers themselves do teach that the Pope may give license to him that is not a Bishop, to Ordain: so that he to whom such license is given, have those orders himself, which he would give to another. *Summa Angelic. ordo. §. 2.* If therefore by the Popes license a Presbyter may Ordain Presbyters, much better may a company of Presbyters, to whom in the *Want of a Bishop the charge of the Church is devolved*, be authorized thereto by Necessity, which as they say, hath no Law.] So far B. Downname.

3. B. *Jewell* in his Defence of the Apol. (authorized to be kept in all Churches) Part 2. p. 131. [Neither doth the Church of England depend on them whom you so often call Apostates, as if our Church were no Church without them. They are no Apostates Mr H. & c. Notwithstanding if there were not one, neither of them, nor of us, left alive, yet would not therefore the whole Church of England flee to *Lovaine*. *Tertullian* saith, *Nonne & Laici Sacerdotes sumus ? Scriptum est, Regnum quoque & Sacerdotes Deo & Patri suo nos fecit : Differentiam inter ordinem & plebem constituit Ecclesia Autoritas, & honos per ordinis confessum sanctificatus à Deo. Ubi Ecclesiastici ordinis non est confessus, & offert, & tingit Sacerdos qui est ibi solus. Sed & ubi tres sunt, Ecclesia est, licet Laici.*] See more of Bishop *Jewels* minde, Part 3. p. 346. & p. 2. c. 3. Div. 5. p. 109, 110, 111. & c. 9. Divis. 1. and his Sermon on *Hag. 1.* and against their doctrine of succession, p. 2. c. 5. Divis. 1. pag. (mihi) 127, 128, 129. So much for him.

4. Learned *Sacavia*, de divers. Ministr. gradib. cap. 2. pag. 10, 11.

5. Bishop *Alley* in his poor mans Library, *Praelect. 6. & Praelect. 3. p. 95, 96.*

6. Bishop *Pilkinton* in his Treat. of the burning of *Pauls Church*, and on *Hag. c. 1. ver. 1, 2, 3. to 14. c. 2. v. 1. to 11.* and on *Abdaas* or *Obadiah v. 7, 8.*

7. Bishop *Bridges* for Supremacy, pag. 359, to 364.

8. Bishop *Bilson* in his Difference between Christian subjection and unchristian Rebellion, pag. 540, 541, 542. Part 3. & passim, pag. 233, 234.

9. *Alex.*

9. *Alex. Novell* Dean of *Pauls*, in his *Reproof of Dormans Proof*,
fol. 43, 44, 45.

10. *Grotius* himself in his *li. de Imperio sum. potest. circa sacra*, cap.
 11. p. 336. saith, that by the precept of Gods Law nothing is on ei-
 ther side determined, as to those Church-Offices, which some Re-
 formed Churches use, and others use not. And having laid down
 divers Propositions in favour of Episcopacy, he addes these follow-
 ing in favour of Presbytery, as consistent with the former.
 [Pag. 354. *Rursum pro Pastorum aequalitate hac prioribus illis minime*
pugnantia asserimus. 1. Episcopalem eminentiam non esse divini præ-
cepti. Probatur hoc satis quia non probatur contrarium, &c. 2. Non
plane universaliter observatum, ut cuique civitati unus Episcopus præ-
esset: de temporibus id jam probatum arbitramur; postea quoque sæpe
plures in una urbe Episcopi imitatione Judæorum, qui quot habebant syn-
agogas, totidem Archisynagogos: Multa autem in una sæpe urbe syna-
goga (mark that) aut (ut Philo etiam appellat) αἱρετικῶν: unde illud
in satyra, In qua te quero profeucha, &c. p. 357. Jam vero etiam Ca-
thedra Episcopales multis in urbibus sæpe non menses tantum aliquot,
sed & per annos etiam multos vacavere; quo omni tempore Ecclesia, ut
cum Hieronymo etiam loquar, communi Presbyterorum consilio guber-
nabantur, aut ut Ignatium loquentem audivimus οἱ ἀπὸ πάντων ἐκκλησιῶν ἐκπορεύοντες
τὸ πρῶτον. Et pag. 358. Quanquam autem ex horum patrum sententia,
Presbyteris adimitur ordinandi jus, quod ipsum multis in Synodis con-
stitutum videri est; Quid tamen obstat quo minus id ita interpretemur
ut Presbyteri neminem potuerint ordinare contempto Episcopo? Una cum
Episcopo concurrisse aliquatenus Presbyteros ad ordinationem docere vi-
detur Synod. 4. Carthag. &c. Illud interea non video quomodo refelli
possit, ubi Episcopi non sunt, etiam à Presbytero recti fieri ordinationem:
Cum hoc ipsum inter scholasticos Altisiodorensis jam pridem concesserit.
Nimirum ea quæ ἐκκλησίᾳ causa observantur, exceptiones suas habent.
Quomodo in veteri Concilio Carthag. in causa necessitatis Presbyteris con-
ceditur reconciliare penitentes: & alibi manus imponere baptizatis.
Dein ut supra diximus, dubium an Episcopis, an Presbyteris meris,
propriores sint Presbyteri, qui nec sub se Presbyteros, nec supra
se Episcopum habent. Nam & de Timotheo ita argumentatur Ambro-
sius [Qui ante se alterum non habebat, Episcopus erat.] Nimirum
(ut e Republica, sumamus exemplum.) Multa licent senatui Regem
non habenti, quæ senatui sub Rege constituto non licent: Quia senatus
sine Rege, quasi est Rex. 3. Hoc asseramus: Non leves fuisse causas cur
hoc sæculi nonnullis in locis Episcopatus ceterè ad tempus aliquod omitte-
retur.

retur. 1. Penuria virorum, &c. 2. Causa hujus consilii esse potuit longa atque inveterata jam planè Episcopalis officii depravatio: (Vide ultra.) At profectò nunquam tantos ab Apostolorum ævo ad illa tempora processus ambitio Ecclesiastica fecerat, quantum ab istis seculis ad patrum nostrorum memoriam, ut jam nisi abscissa parte causariâ, morbus vix sanari posse videatur, &c. Quid quod & nomen & eminentia Episcopalis eorum culpa quibus obtigerat, omnem sui reverentiam perdiderat, & in odium venerat plebis, cui etiâ erranti interdum mos est gerendus? 3. Causa addi potest, quod infestissimis temporibus, magistri veritatis nomine, invisa non culpam tantum ambitionis, sed & suspicionem omnem amoliri debuerant; quod cum sublata Episcopali dignitate sollicitè curaverint, ne sic quidem tamen calumniam effugerunt: Quid non audituri, si doctrinæ mutatio conjuncta fuisset cum majoris gradus adeptione? Adjiciam unam insuper causam cur initio repurgationis non admodum necessarius fuerit Episcopatus. Excitarat Deus præstantes viros, summo ingenio, summa eruditione, nec minore tam apud suos, quam apud vicinos autoritate pollentes, paucos quidem numero, sed qui plurimis negotiis sustinendis pares essent: horum summa apud omnes existimatio, facile supplevit quod ab Episcopatu deerat. Et (si cum Zanchio verum volumus agnoscere) reipsa nulli magis Episcopi fuere, quam illi ipsi quorum (quamvis hoc non agentium) autoritas ad oppugnandum usque Episcopatum valuit, &c.] Et p. 367. [Exercitium ergo clavium, & jus absolvendi penitentes ex omnium patrum sententia solis competunt Sacerdotibus, hoc est, Presbyteris verbi & Sacramentorum depositariis.] Yea in favour of Lay-Elders he asserteth (having argued them not to be of Divine Institution, yet) 1. That they may be lawfully instituted by Sovereigns, or by the Church on their permission. 2. That it may be proved by Scripture that this Institution is not displeasing to God. 3. That there are examples in pious Antiquity, either of this same way, or one very near it. 4. That it is no contemptible benefit, that by these Elders may be received. But these to exercise their Office with several cautions: 1. Not claiming Institution by Divine precept. 2. Not usurping any of the power of the Keyes, nor of Excommunication, further then Excommunication belongeth to the people (executively.) 3. That the men be not unmeet. 4. Exercising no externall Jurisdiction but by publique Law. 5. Standing as mutable. Thus far Grotius.

To all these let me adde two Episcopal Gentlemen, that you may see the difference between Episcopal Protestants and Episcopal secret Cassandrian Papists.

The eleventh shall be Mr *Chisenhall* a Gentleman that lately answered Dr *Vane* (a Chaplain of the Kings lately turned Papist.) That he is no friend to Presbytery you may be out of doubt by his whole Book; and in particular by these discreet gentle terms which he gives to the Presbyterian Church of *Geneva*, pag. 12. [Such an upstart youngling, that wind-egge of a tumult, which being braddened under a Toad of *France*, is become a staring Cockatrice, and thinks to center the world within the compass of his contagious den, darting poyson upon whom he first espies: as experience tels us how he glancing upon the poor *Scot*, has given him such a deadly wound that he will scarce ever recover it, &c.] Is not this Gentleman zealous enough against Presbytery? But yet he is no Papist: Pag. 129. he saith [It is not absolutely necessary that Bishops Ordain Bishops. For what if all the Bishops should dye so near at one time, that none were left Ordained by them? Shall not the Presbytery make Bishops? They have Right to the Keyes; which are called *Claves Ecclesie, non Episcoporum*: and they are the remaining Pillars of the Church, and certainly may Confer the Order of Bishop on others: and that the rather because the Councils forbid Bishops of another Province to Ordain, in a Forreign Province. And though it may seem strange to some that Ministers which are subordinate should Ordain Bishops, and so conferre Superiour Orders; it is not (if rightly examined) contradictory to Reason: For in this first Ordination of Priests and Deacons, they are *infra Ordines majores*, which Orders are called Holy and Sacramentall, and are the highest Orders: Witness Pope *Urban Dec. Dist. 60. sum. sac. Ro. Eccles. 226*. As for the Order of Bishops it is no more then a Priest as to the Holy and Sacramentall Order only: More excellent in respect of the order of Government, *Which is rather of humane then Divine Right*: For as it is Divine it is no more then what every Priest hath by the Sacramentall Order: but as it is humane it is transcendent in relation to Discipline: and therefore the Presbytery may agree to Ordain one over them to Govern them in Ecclesiastical Rites, as the people may choose a Prince to Govern in Civil affairs. Hence it was that the Apostles sent *John* to *Ephesus*, &c.] So far Mr *Chisenhall*.

12. I will adde also the Lord *Digby*'s words in that notable Judicious Letter to Sr *K. Digby*, pag. 118. [He that would reduce the Church now to the form of Government in the most Primitive times, should not take, in my opinion, the best nor wisest course; I am sure not the safest: For he would be found pecking towards the Presbytery

of Scotland; which, for my part, I believe in point of Government hath a greater resemblance then either yours or ours, to the first age of Christs Church, and yet is never a whit the better for it; since it was a form not chosen for the best, but imposed by adversity and oppression; which in the beginning forc't the Church from what it wisht, to what it might; not suffering that dignity and state Ecclesiasticall, which rightly belong'd unto it, to manifest it self to the world: and which soon afterwards upon the least *lucida intervalla* shone forth so gloriously in the happier, as well as more Monarchicall condition of Episcopacy: of which way of Government I am so well perswaded, that I think it pity, it was not made betimes an Article of the *Scottish* Catechism, that Bishops are *jure Divino*. But as it is a true Maxime in nature, *Corruptio optimi pessima*, so it holds likewise in Government both Civil and Ecclesiasticall, &c.] So far the Lord Digby: Whose words I recite not for his Judgement against the Antiquity of Episcopacy (for I now disclaim disputing on that point:) but *a majore*, if Presbytery be likest to the Primitive Government, then at least those may be now true Churches that are without Episcopacy, and those true Ministers that are Ordained without them, and true Ordinances that are administred by such Presbyters.

Nor do I take the L. Digby's Reason for mens varying of Primitive forms of Government to be of solidity or safety. Nor do I alledge any of these fore-mentioned Authours as being of their opinion in the whole, nor as if they were with me of the highest Authority. But to evince the full consent of the Episcopall party of Protestants, calling themselves The Church of *England*; to be downright for the Truth of Ministry and Ordinances where there is no Episcopacy, nor Ordination by any but meer Presbyters: And to shew you that *Rome* hath alway argued for the contrary, and used the same Objections, which I am now answering, and that I answer now but on the grounds of the Episcopal Protestants.

13. The Judgement of Learned Bp Davenant you may see in his *Determ. Qu. 42. pag. 191, 192.* approving of the Ordination of Presbyters in case of Necessity, and in speciall when Bishops fall into heresies, and refuse to ordain Orthodox Pastors, but will ordain only such as will partake with them in their faction and errour; or when they turn combined Enemies to the truth: And hereupon he vindicates the Forreign Churches Ordinations without Bishops.

14. Dr Prideaux our last Bp of Worcester in *Fascic. Cont. de discipl. Eccles. p. 249.* saith, *Presbyterum Presbyteros ordinare posse; praeser-*
tim

tim deficientibus Episcopis, concedit cum magistro sententiarum sanior pars Scholasticorum; ut patet ad sent. l.4. Dist. 25. 2. Episcopatum retinent tales Ecclesie (viz. transmarine) licet non per manum unius Monarchicè, sed Aristocraticè per multos administratum. 3. Moderatores & superintendentes ipsorum analogicè sunt apud ipsos Episcopi, & autoritate (ut contendunt) ordinandi pollent cum fratribus;] And Orat. 8. de vocat. Ministr. p.77. he saith, that [those that were baptized of Hereticks themselves are truly baptized, and those that are ordained by them are truly ordained.]

15. Bp Andrews also (as I remember, for I have not the Book now by me) in his Epistles to *Molineus*, goes the same way.

16. See also how directly our Objectors imitate the Jesuite that disputeth against Dr Potter, Chap.6. § 20. 21. 22. 23. And see *Chillingworths* full Answer to him, too long to transcribe; Some of his Questions are these, pag. 360. [Whether all those Protestants that conceive the distinction between Priests and Bishops, not to be of divine Institution, be schismaticall and hereticall for thinking so? Whether your form of ordaining Bishops and Priests be essential to a true Church? &c. Whether in saying that the true Church cannot subsist without undoubted true Bishops and Priests, you have not overthrown the truth of your own Church? Wherein I have proved it plainly Impossible, that any man should be so much as morally certain either of his own Priesthood, or any other mans? Lastly, Whether any one kinde of these external Forms and Orders and Government, be so necessary to the being of a Church, but that they may not be divers in divers places? and that a good and peaceable Christian may and ought to submit himself to the Government of the place where he lives, whatsoever he be? &c.]

Much more might be added out of many Authors to prove that the Doctrine of the old Episcopall Protestants is not contradicted by any thing in our Agreement, but by the Objectors is directly opposed.

But I know some will marvell that I bestow so many words in so plain a case, and trouble the Reader and my self with such frivolous Objections, which deserve not a serious Answer (for some have told me all this) But they must know that I have Reasons of weight for what I do. They are men of no contemptible Parts, though of Popish inclinations that manage these Objections, and make a great matter of them; and they are many of them well-meaning men, and of no contemptible Understandings, who through accidental advan-

rages, are taken with them. And if liberty of Sects and Separations be publicly granted and confirmed to all, you shall soon finde that the Party that I am dealing with, will soon by their numbers obscure all other Parties that now trouble our Peace (except the Papiſts.)

Having therefore ſhewed that the Conſent of Proteſtant Biſhops is againſt them, I will give you ſome further diſcovery of their deſignes; only adding here that ſaying of *Musculus* (not as his, but becauſe) cited by *Grotius*, *de Imperio ſum. poteſt.* c. 10. pag. 322, 323. [*Paſtorem Chriſtianum de Vocatione ſua ſollicitum eſſe non debere, neque ambigere quin Chriſtiana ac legitima ſit ſua Vocatio ubi ad Evangelium predicandum à pio Magiſtratu aut Principe vocatus eſt.*] Though I know this ſpeech muſt be underſtood *cum grano ſalis*, ſome other requiſites being here ſuppoſed as implied.

13. It may eaſily appear whether the Objectors be greater friends to *Rome*, then to our old Episcopall Divines, by the tendency of their preſent plot: For they would have all the people take us for no Miniſters, and our Churches for no Churches, and ſo all Gods worſhip be neglected in publique where no Biſhops or their Miſſionaries are. And ſo when all others are diſſeiſed and turned out, the Papiſts may freely enter, there being none but theſe few faithfull friends of their own to keep them out, which how well they will do you may by theſe conjecture.

14. The Objectors do openly back the Papiſts in the Argument of ſucceſſion as a proper note of a true Church, againſt the ſtream of Proteſtants that have fully confuted them, both Biſhops and others. It were in vain for me to fall on this diſpute with theſe Doctors, as long as ſo many Volumes againſt *Bellarmino* are unanſwered. Dr *Sutlive* ſaith, *In externâ ſucceſſione quam & heretici ſæpe habent & Orthodoxi Non habent, nihil eſt momenti, lib. de Eccleſ. cap. 18. fol. 123. pag. 2.* Reade more largely Bp *Jewell* Defence of the Apol. par. 2. pag. 131, 132. and in other places. But it were endleſſe to cite all that joyn with us in this againſt the Popiſh neceſſity of ſucceſſion: and it is needleſſe as to thoſe that have read the writings of our Engliſh Biſhops and other Divines, who muſt needs know already how fully they ſpeak to this point.

15. But it is a higher charge then Popery, that theſe Episcopall Doctors that I now ſpeak of, are liable to: For my part, I ſee not how they can be excuſed from unchurching, if not unchriſtianing all the people of Chriſt on the whole earth; or at leaſt leaving it utterly

ly uncertain, whether Christ hath ever a Church, or ever a baptized Christian on the earth? For according to them, no Church is a true Church without Ministers (and it is true of an organized political Church,) and no man is a Minister that is not Ordained by a Bishop; because meer Presbyters have no Power to Ordain; and no man is a Bishop that is not Ordained by a Bishop; and this must be a true Bishop, lawfully called, and not deprived again of his power; and this must be Ordained by a former Bishop, and he by a former, and so the succession must be followed to the Apostles. Now I would desire these seekers (for such they are) to resolve me these few doubts.

1. Can all the poor Christians in our Churches in faith submit to your own Ministry, or to any other mans on earth, as being true Ministers of Christ Authorized to Baptize, Administer the Supper, Guide the Church? &c. Can they know that the line of your succession hath been uninterrupted from the Apostles daies till now?

2. Nay, can your selves or any the learned'st Cardinals at *Rome*, or Bishops on earth know that your successions have not been interrupted? Is Church-History so clear, full and infallible in this? Suppose that by the advantage of the eminency of *Rome* (being the Imperial Seat, and so populous) that they could have such a Certainty of History, Hath every true Church or Bishop or Presbyter in the world so too? If so, I confess Historians have plaid their parts better, both for fulness and faithfulness, then ever I dreamed of.

3. Do you not deserve ill at the hands of all Gods Churches, and God himself, to bring all poor Christians to such an uncertainty as this, whether they have true Baptism, Ministry, Worship, &c. and to leave all Ministers at such a loss that no one man on earth (much less all) can act in Faith? How dare they adventure on a Calling which no man living can assure them that they are lawfully called to? and how should they comfortably go on in the works of it?

4. Must not all these following things concur before you can know that you are a Minister on your own grounds? 1. You must be sure that he that Ordained you, was Ordained himself by a Bishop. 2. You must be sure that this Bishops own Ordination was such as was not void by the Canon: (that is, that it had not as great a defect as the Ordination of meer Presbyters which you say is Null.) And here what a loss are you at when some Councils allow that which another condemns: Some do make Null those Ordinations which others allow of. Particularly, you must be sure that he came not in by Simony (a hard matter :) that he was not a Heretick, or erroneous in the Fun-

damentals : that he was not Ordained by a Bishop without the reach of his own Jurisdiction (else many Canons Null it :) that he was not a man through ignorance or wickedness utterly incapable of the Office : that he was chosen by the Clergy over whom he was to be Bishop (and not only by a Chapter or the King :) Yea that the people themselves had their voices in the Election, or were called to Consent (according to *Cyprian* and the elder times ;) and that the people be present, and have liberty to make their exceptions, according to later times : with many the like. 3. You must be certain that all the Bishops successively from the Apostles times, by whom you draw your claim, were thus Ordained : For one Nullity breaks the whole chain, and nulleth all that follow, as you suppose. 4. You must be sure that never a one of all these Bishops did lose his power again by Heresie, wickedness or other means, before he Ordained the next. 5. You must be certain that the Bishop had *intentionem Ordinandi* (if you be right Papists indeed.) 6. You must know who was the Apostle that was the root of your own succession ; which is a greater matter then to know what Apostle did first convert the Nation.

See B. 11th. And do you indeed know all these things? Is it indeed so certain
ers Brit. whether it were *Joseph* of *Arimathea*, or *Simon Zelotes*, or any such
Eccle. Pri- man, that first converted *England*? Nay do you know the Names
mor. c. 1, 2, of your Predecessors before the time of *Augustine* the Monk? And
3. 4. 5. if you know not who the men were, much less do you know that they were every man of them truly Ordained. If you have curranter History of these things then is yet openly known, why do you not produce it? When the very general Question, Whether Bishops were put in the places of the Flamins, and Archflamins, is so uncertainly determined by History, that about thirty Historians affirm it, and yet Bishop *Usher*, *Jewell*, *Godwin*, Dr *Suttcliffe*, Sr *H. Spelman*, deny it : I think waking men will hardly affirm a Certainty of any History of their own succession by an uninterrupted series of truly Ordained lawfull Bishops to the Apostle that Ordained the first Bishop. Nay it's well known, that a great part of the Christian world is Uncertain what particular Apostle did first convert their particular Countries : which yet were it known, would go but a little way toward the resolving our doubt.

But perhaps some will say, It is not necessary that I prove my succession, let others disprove it that question it. I answer, 1. That Argument may serve to stop the mouth of some busie Questionists ; In foro externo humano it may have some force : But will that serve before

before God? Either you are a true Pastor or not. If you are not, it is not the difficulty of discovery or of eviction that will make you one: If all the Baptism, and other Ministerial acts that you have performed, are Null, it is not mens inability to prove them Null, that will make them Valid. 2. That should, methinks, be but small satisfaction to your own Conscience neither: For Conscience will expect that you prove your Authority, and not only that others cannot disprove it. For it is Gods judgement and not mans, to which you must stand or fall. And therefore Conscience must needs put you to resolve this Question, How know you that you are a true Minister? and so, How know you that your succession hath been uninterrupted, from an Apostle, in point of lawfull Ordination? 3. But if you think it be enough to Conscience, that you know nothing to the contrary; or that you *think* you have an uninterrupted succession; then why may not this serve turn as well for others? Those that think Bishops to be a humane Institution and unlawfull, do think themselves more rightly Ordained then you; and therefore if *thinking* will serve turn, why may it not serve their turn? 4. And for our people, if it be enough to satisfie their Consciences that Sacraments and other our Ministerial Administrations are no Nullities, because they think so, or because they cannot disprove our claim, then why must they not on that ground submit to them that were Ordained without Bishops, when they cannot disprove their claim? 5. Nay why should people trouble themselves to know whether men be Ordained at all or no? When Thinking must and will serve turn, and a true discovery is impossible. For though you can shew your Orders, yet you cannot shew all the succession of Orders from the Apostle to your Ordainer. I think that man that dare affirm that any one Pastor on earth can know that he is a true Pastor, (if a succession of right Ordination uninterrupted be necessary to it and if want of that make the Ordination a Nullity,) is sick of the disease that *Festus* suspected in *Paul*, and is elevated so farre on the wings of Pride and Learning, that he is quite overgone Humility and Reason.

5. But yet this is not all. Do not these mens grounds leave it certain, that Christ hath no true Church or Ministry, or Ordinances, or Baptized Christians in *England*, nay in all the Western Churches, and perhaps not in the whole world? And then see whether these Popish Divines must not prove Seekers.

For the Greek Church it is well known how oft the succession of
their

their Patriarch hath been interrupted, as to right Ordination; those being thrust in that had no call thereto: and so all the Ordinations that did flow down from them must needs be Null. And there is as little probability of an uninterrupted succession of right Ordination in the Æthiopian Churches, and those scattered rude Christians in Egypt, Palestine, &c. Bellarmine saith (*de Notis Eccles. l. 4. cap. 8. p. (mihi). 312.* *Non posse ostendi in Ecclesia Græca certam successionem: Nam 1. Fatetur Calvinus in Asia, Egypto & proinde Antiochia, Hierosolymæ, & Alexandria interruptam fuisse successionem: sola constat Constantinopolitana Ecclesia, &c. At Constantinopolitana Ecclesia non est Apostolica; nec ostendit certam originem ab Apostolis, &c.* *Quod autem apud Græcos non sit Ecclesia, probamus alio modo; quia nimirum conviisti sunt legitimè in tribus plenariis conciliis, Lateranensi, Lugdunensi, & Florentino de schismate at heresi; ac præcipuè de heresi circa processionem Spiritus Sancti à Filio, &c. Adde ultimò omnes Ecclesie ille Patriarchales, habuerunt per longa tempora Episcopos manifestos hæreticos, & proinde interrupta est veterum Pastorum successio.*]

And of the adherents to the Pope in Africa, and Asia he saith, [*Non posse quidem ostendere successionem continuam Episcoporum suorum particularium, sed posse ostendere successionem continuam Episcoporum universalium, qui sunt Romani Episcopi, quibus illi subjectos se esse fatentur.*] So that you see in Bellarmine's Judgement what case the rest of the world is in, except the Romanists. And yet the successive right Ordination is a matter of more apparent impossibility to be proved, then the succession that Bellarmine speaks of.

Let us therefore come neerer home and see, Whether it be not Certain beyond all doubt, upon the grounds of Bellarmine and our Popish Doctors, that there is no true Church, Ministry or Ministerial administrations, in this Western part of the world? To begin at home, it is most certain, 1. That according to many ancient Canons (which are their Laws) our English Bishops of latest times were incapable of ordaining; For they lost their Authority, by involving themselves in secular and publique administrations, *Canon Apost. 80.* For neglect of instructing their Flocks (most or many of them) *Can. Apost. 51.* and many more: For non-residence: For unjust silencing and suspending Ministers, and destroying the Preaching of the word, suppressing Learned able Teachers, and maintaining or permitting multitudes of silly souls that could but read and multitudes of drunken wicked livers. How many Canons do depose Bishops for these! Yet I know we had some very Learned, Pious, Reverend

rend men. 2. But then even these with all the rest were Ordained by such as had no Authority (according to the doctrine of these Objectors, consequentially) For the Popish Bishops who Ordained in the daies of *Hen. 8. H. 7.* and many Ages before, had no power of Ordination. This I prove in that they received their Ordination from the Pope, who had no Authority to Ordain them. To say that *England* had Bishops before *Augustine*, is nothing to the business of Ordination, as long as it is undeniable that the *English* Bishops and Clergy did enslave themselves to the Pope, and profess their subjection to him, and to receive and hold their Authority from him. So that if the Pope had no Power to give Orders, then they were no Bishops (according to the Objectors rule.) Now that the Pope hath no Authority to Ordain, shall be made evident; by shewing that the succession of lawfull Bishops hath been interrupted at *Rome*, and so none since (on their own grounds) can be a true Bishop. 1. I will not undertake to maintain that the Pope is Antichrist, professing my weakness and ignorance of those Propheticall Scriptures, to be so great, that I dare not be confident in my interpretations of them: But yet our English Protestant Bishops have commonly been confident of it, and maintained it: and Bishop *Downes* Book de *Antichristo*, deserves consideration: and if that hold then the case is clear. 2. But however, that it is certain that multitudes of Popes have been such as were utterly incapable of the Office of a Bishop, and power of making Bishops, is evident to any that hath read *Pauls* Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, and the old Canons and the Histories of the Popes lives. Pope *Liberius* subscribed to the Arians Confession in the Council of *Sirmium* [*Libenti animo suscepi in nullo contradicens*] and to that Councils condemnation of *Athanasius*. Vid. Binnium Tom. 1. Conc. part. 1. p. 470, 480, 422. & Baron. anno 357. §. 9. & 344. §. 3, 4, 5. & *Belarm. l. 4. de Pontif. c. 9.* Pope *Honorius* in two General Councils was condemned for a Heretick. Vid. Bin. Conc. 5. Occum. Pope *Stephen 6.* and *Sergius 1.* did judge Pope *Formosus* incapable of Ordaining, when they Decreed that those whom he Ordained, should be Ordained again. Vid. *Sigebert. Chron. p. 74. anno 902.* Reade but what *Platina* saith of them in *Vit. Greg. 7. Urban. 7. Alexand. 3. Alex. 6. John 13. Joh. 22. & 23.* Some were Sorcerers, some Idolaters, some jested at Christianity it self; some Arians, Nestorians, Monothelites, Montanists, denied the souls immortality: besides their infamous Whoredoms, Tyranny, Murders, Poysoning their Predecessors, Buying the Popedom, &c. But I had rather give you this in other

mens words, as by them applied to the Argument in hand. Bishop *Jewell* *Defen. Apolog. part. 2. p. 131. c. 5. Divis. 1.* saith, [I trust you will not think it ill, if I a little touch the like in the Bishops of *Rome*, that thereby we may be the better able to see some of the branches of your succession: Therefore shortly to say, you know that Pope *Marcellinus* committed Idolatry: that Pope *Silvest. 2.* was a Conjuror, and gave himself whole body and soul to the Devil, and by the Devils procurement was made Pope: That Pope *Zosimus* for ambition and claim of Government corrupted the holy Council of *Nice*: That Pope *Liberius* was an Arian heretick: That Pope *Leo*, as appeareth by the *Legend*, was also an Arian: That Pope *Celestine* was a Nestorian heretick: Pope *Honorius* a Monothelite heretick: Pope *John. 22.* was reprov'd by *Gerson* and the School of *Paris* for an heretick, &c. And to leave Dame *Joane*, &c. This is Mr *H.*'s holy succession! Though faith fail, yet succession must hold: For unto such succession God hath bound the holy Ghost. For lack of this succession, for that in our Sees in the Churches of *England* we finde not so many Idolaters, Necromancers, Hereticks, Advouterers, Church-robbers, Perjured persons, Mankillers, Renegates, Monsters, Scribes and Pharisees, as we may easily finde in the Church of *Rome*, therefore I trow Mr *H.* saith, we have no succession, no Bishops, we have no Church at all. But St *Paul* saith [Faith cometh (not by succession, but) by hearing, and hearing cometh (not of Legacy or Inheritance from Bishop to Bishop, but) of the Word of God.] So far *Jewell*.

That truly Noble Lord *Du Plessis* saith, in Treat. of the Ch. c. 11. p. 362. &c. [Examining the Election of the Bishops of the Romish Church, a man shall hardly finde one that may be called a Bishop that can hold proof against the Canons Apostolicall or Ecclesiasticall, either in that which concerneth lawfull Calling or the due exercise of it: Not of Calling; for where is the Election, or the Examination of life and of maners? Where is not (contrariwise) either only favour, or meer Simony? and yet the Canons are plain [That such Institutions of Bishops are void of themselves, and all those likewise void that they bestow upon others.] And, I pray you, when Pope *Eugenius 4.* is deposed by the Oecumenicall Council of *Basill*, and pronounced a Heretick and Schismatick, and all his adherents likewise, and yet retaineth the Papall Authority against the Judgement of that Council, where are the Cardinals and Bishops communicating with one excommunicated, instituted by one destituted, recei-

ving

ving of him who was deprived of his Calling, a Calling which he could not give? and transfusing it to others; which consequently could not have it themselves. And where is there then (according to their Canons, and according to their own Decrees) so much as one Bishop, or one Priest, since all that time, &c. Not the Bishop of Rome himself created by the creatures of *Eugenius*, or by those whom from time to time they have created: seeing the Law tels us, that *Quod initio vitiosum est, non potest tractu temporis convalescere*, &c. (see further.) So far *Du Plessis*.

Nay were there nothing against the Bishops of Rome but their claiming the Title of Universall Bishops, their own Pope *Gregory* will pronounce (*Epist.* 80.) that it is no other thing then to fall from the Faith: and (*Epist.* 188.) it is Apostacy: and (*Ep.* 78.) it portendeth Antichrist: (yea surpasseth his pride, *Ep.* 80.)

Reade Dr *Prideaux* Lect. 11. de *Antichristo*, & 9. And *Sutlive* fully.

And whether the Reign of Pope *Joane* be of no truth, or force to interrupt the succession, let it rest on the credit of that great number of Historians that report it.

If any man will say, that the Ordination of such as these forementioned Popes, is of more validity then of an Assembly of the most Learned Godly Presbyters, I think them not worthy any further confutation: Yet I desire them to regard these following words of Learned Dr *Hammond* in his Defence of the Lord *Falkland*, pag. 64. [I ask you whether it be not true what his Lordship saith, that a Pope chosen by Simony, is *ipso facto* no Pope? You (durst not I conceive, because you) did not before deny it: and if now you will take more courage, let your minde be known, and we shall not doubt to bring as Classick Authors as your selves against you. If it be true, then is your answer of no validity, because of no truth: For either that infallibility, or what ever other power, must be annexed to him as a man (which he may be indeed though he be not Pope) or under some other relation, which infallibly belongs to him (neither of which I conceive you will affirm, for then ten thousand to one, some other will communicate with him in that claim) or else he must be Pope, when he is *ipso facto* no Pope; or else that power must be annexed to him by some body that may think him Pope, when he is not, and then either God must run the Errour, or that power be given him from some others. For that God should know him to be no Pope, and yet give that power of Infallibility to him (for if you

Speak of any other Power it is not pertinent) as long as he is peaceably received, must first conclude that a No-Pope may be Infallible. And secondly, that whosoever is so received by the Church, is so: which unless there be some promise of Gods to assure me that he hath promised it to the Churches blinde reception, will for ought I yet see, conclude again, that either the *Chair*, or the peoples error gives him that prerogative.] Apply this reason to their Ordination, and you need no more in answer to your Objection. See further Dr *Hammond* pag. 66, 67.

So that it is too evident, not only that there is no certainty to be had in the *Roman* Church (and consequently in any that received their power from them) that there is any one true Bishop, Pastor or Ministeriall Administration, if succession of lawfull Ordination be necessary to the Being of these, but also it is certain that there is no Bishop or Ministry, and so no Church and Ordinances; which is a Conclusion so notoriously false and abominable, that we may know what to judge of the premises whence it is inferred.

By this time therefore I hope it is apparent that our Ministers Calling is not therefore Null, because they are Ordained by meer Presbyters. And that they that would by such accusations entice people from their Pastors to *Rome*, if they follow on the work according to their Principles, must bring them at last to be of no Church. Adde to this what I have said in the Preface to the second Part of my Book of *Rest*, and you will see that at long running the Principles of Popery do leade to flat Infidelity.

Bellarmino confesseth (l. 3. de Eccles. c. 10.) that [*Non habemus certitudinem nisi Moralem, quod isti sint Veri Episcopi.*] (He was loth to speak out and say the plain truth, that we can have no proper Morall Certainty at all, no nor probability.) But what then must save this sore? why we may know that [*Aliqui saltem sunt Veri: aliqui Deus Ecclesiam deseruisset.*] True: but therefore it follows that a succession of right Ordination (as you maintain) is not necessary to such a knowledge. And then how shall it be known by the Lords Flock which be these true Pastors? Why he tels us [*Certi sumus certitudine infallibili, quod isti quos videmus sint Veri Episcopi & Pastores nostri: Nam ad hoc non requiritur, nec fides, nec character Ordinis, nec legitima electio, sed solum ut habeantur pro talibus ab Ecclesia.*] I pray you mark that all this is but *quod Christi locum tenent, & quod debemus illis Obedientiam*: But for this second [*Quod habeant potestatem Ordinis & Jurisdictionis*] poor *Bellarmino* leaves the Christian world

world at a loss; as if it were a thing not to be known. 2. And he durst not say, that God bindeth a people to obey him as being in Christs place, who hath not the power of Order and Jurisdiction: But this is all [*Eos non esse quidem in se veros Episcopos; tamen donec pro talibus habentur ab Ecclesiâ, deberi illis obedientiam, cum conscientia etiam erronea obliget.*] So that is but the Obligation of an erring Conscience, and not of God. But wiser men then Bellarmine say, Conscience hath no proper Sovereignty or Legislative power, and therefore may *ligare*, but not *obligare*, we being *eo ipso momento* bound both to judge more truly, and lay by that error, and also to practice the contrary. 3. Observe, I pray you, that the upshot of all is, that this is the whole thats requisite: [*Solum ut habeantur pro talibus ab Ecclesiâ*] and so I hope if the Church judge men Ordained without Bishops to be true Pastors, you have Bellarmines testimony that they owe them obedience, as to men that stand in Christs place. But I have been too long about this Section.

16. In the time of the Arian prevalency, when, as the Papists confess scarce five Bishops could be found that were not turned Arians, was there not then an interruption of succession in point of right Ordinations? and was all Null both then and since?

17. I have known in the Bishops daies more then one or two idle ignorant Readers, that feigned their Orders, and made the people believe that they were Ordained by the Bishop, and continued many a year in Administration of both Sacraments; and yet when it was discovered, it was not taken for Null which they had all this while done. Why then should Presbyters Ordination be Null?

18. It was not necessary to the Priesthood before Christ, that there were an uninterrupted succession of right Ordination: For the Priests in Christs time were such as had no right to it; not of the right line (which had been long before interrupted:) they bought the Priesthood for Money: and as many judge, were annual and two at a time (though not equal:) Yet Christ requireth submission to them as Priests. I am sorry that we must be put to use the same Arguments with these men, as we have done against the old Separatists so long.

But some will Object, That all this doth only prove, that in case of Necessity Presbyters may Ordain, and their Ordination is not Null: But those cannot plead such Necessity that have disobediently put down Bishops themselves.

To this I Answer : 1. Most Ministers of any long standing were Ordained by Bishops, and therefore will have no need of any of this Defence that I have used.

2. The Churches have never the less Necessity of Pastors and Ordinances, notwithstanding the faults of their Pastors.

3. I know of few or none of our Association that can be charged with taking down Bishops : I know none so liable to such a charge as my self, who yet am ready to give an account to any Brother that is offended ; and I beleieve that they ought to rebuke me personally and hear my answer, before they withdraw from me, or censure me ; much more so many others for my sake.

4. I do not know of any that can be charged higher (as against Episcopacy) then for taking it down so far as the Covenant takes it down. But the Covenant doth not take down all Episcopacy ; but only the concatenation of Archbishops, Bishops, Chancellours, &c. which were then in *England*. To prove this 1. The words suffice, which can be no further extended then to the kinde of Episcopacy. 2. See Mr *Colemans* Explication of it to the Lords house, upon which they took it, as in that sense.

Besides, we have not in this County (any where that I know of) once offered the Covenant to any of our people (except those that were in the Garrisons, or Armies :) See further Mr *Prins* Speech in Parliament for an Agreement on the late Kings last terms.

5. The late Bishops, even in the judgement of all moderate men of their own party that ever I spoke with, did very many of them deserve to be put down, and more. Reade the Articles against *Wren*, *Pierce*, *Goodman*, *Laud*, &c.

6. We do in the very first Article of our Agreement, disclaim a present engaging our selves for any party, as such : or against any : and therefore we cannot in any Justice be disclaimed as a party that are confederate against Episcopacy : When we only desire a unanimous agreement in practice, so far as we are already agreed in Judgment, that our discord or strangeness may neither hinder our further edification, nor yet deprive the Church of Gods Ordinances, or of the beauty, strength, and other benefits of Union.

But perhaps it will be said, that We have no such Necessity, either of Ordination without Bishops, or of private agreements to Govern our Churches without them : For either we have Bishops, or may have when we will.

To which I Answer : 1. Whether we have Bishops or no, we must Govern the Churches committed to our charge, so far as belongs to Presbyters : and we have agreed on no more.

2. I know not of any Bishop we have in this County (nor in many near us :) and therefore how can any seek to them whom they know not, either for Ordination or Government ? If any man will come among us, and prove himself to be our Bishop rightly called, he shall finde that we will be ready (I hope) to yield him as much obedience as Gods Word commands us.

3. We know but very few Diocesan Bishops living in the Land ; whereof one is a Bishop of another Land, two or three at a very great distance, none of them Bishops of this Diocess : some (I think) in the Tower, where we cannot come at them, and by their impeachments, suppose them incapable of Ordaining : Therefore we are incapable of making use of these.

4. We are all Ordained already, and we cannot be new-Ordained again, without 1. Incurring the sentence of deprivation, according to the *Can. Apost. 67.* which requires that he be Deposed who seeketh another Ordination, being already Ordained. 2. Or without un-Churching all or most of Christs Churches, and Degrading his Ministers, by taking our Ordination for Null, as hath been shewed. And we do not go about our selves by this Agreement to meddle with Ordination.

5. This Objection supposeth, either that we are convinced that Diocesan Episcopacy, is the only lawfull Government of the Church, or else that we may be convinced of it when we will ; or else that Diocesan Episcopacy is such a Fundamentall, that he that beleeveth it not to be Gods only way of Church-Government, (though he be never so willing and diligent to know the truth, yet) must be avoided, and separated from. But the two former suppositions we know to be false, and the third no Protestant takes for a Truth. For 1. Protestants have taken the Creed, Lords Prayer and ten Commandments, for a sufficient test of Christian Doctrine, so far as to discern who are Christians and to be communicated with ; at least taking them with that Explication which an ordinary Believer may easily and certainly finde out, in the rest of the Scriptures. They take those to be no Fundamentals, which so many hundreds of men, yea the most Learned and Godly on earth, cannot yet agree in, or finde out the sense of. 2. Protestants do not believe that all the Protestant Churches except *England* and *Ireland* (no nor any one for want of

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Episcopacy) are to be excommunicated, or separated from. The Objectors must therefore remember, that we are not all of a minde about Episcopacy, and therefore cannot yet set it up; because we must not do that which we judge to be against Gods Word. But must we therefore separate or leave all undone? and give up our Flocks to rapine and ruine?

If they say that men of such erroneous principles, if they cannot be rectified, are bound to give up the Ministry to others of better judgements.

I Answer: 1. Shew me but where those men are, in so full a number as may supply the Churches necessities, but so farre, as that I and such as I may conscionably surcease, without the Churches loss; and I here promise that I will joyfully give up my Office, when ever any such fitter man shall be called to my place. And I think the rest of my Brethren will do the like. But we live in the open world, where we have opportunity to know men, as well as others: and we cannot see any such plentiful choice of Able, Pious men to supply all our Places if we should give them up. And either the late Bishops knew of none such; or else they took the drunken Readers (that could scarce yet have a *Legit* to save their necks, if they needed it) to be fitter men then we to edifie the Flocks.

2. It seems these Objectors are of the same minde as the late Prelates, and would deprive and silence us all that are not convinced of the Rightfulness of Episcopacy, if it were in their power. For if they think that we may not be Associated or Communicated with as Ministers, unless we will set up Episcopacy; it seems they would authoritatively remove us, if they could, though we yet do nothing against them.

3. Methinks, modest humble men, conscious of the frailty and fallibility of their own understandings, should not be so confident in a Point so difficult; or at least should not be so unmercifully censorious to their Brethren, as to cast off all that cannot see into a case so difficult so far as they, (suppose they see themselves.) If they think it is of no great difficulty then they are yet more unchristianly censorious, to think that so many Learned, Judicious, Godly Divines as since the Reformation have been against Episcopacy in *France, Holland, Helvetia, Germany, Scotland*, yea in *England*, should all be so wicked, as to shut their eyes against so easie a Truth, this is a hard judgement for humble men to pass. We must intreat them to suppose that as we have read many of their Writings for Episcopacy, so we have

have read many against it : And among such Probabilities brought on both sides by such Learned men, we take it not for such an easie matter to be certain of the right, as some confident men affirm it to be. I know that many heap up arguments and bring us long rolls of Authorities for Episcopacy. And I know that *Gerson, Bucerus, Beza, Altare Damascenum, Parker, Baines, Salmasius, Blondellus, Prin* (in his Catalogue of Writers against Bishops, and in his History of Bishops, Part 2. Ch. 3. and unbishoping of *Timothy* and *Titus*.) Dr *Reignolds*, and others, do give us as long a train of Arguments and Authorities on the other side. For our parts, we are some of one minde (it's likely) in this, and some of another ; and it is utterly against my purpose to speak on either side ; but, methinks all those men that have without prejudice read the Authors that I have mentioned (especially *Bucerus, Parker, and Blondellus, and Salmasius,*) yea though they have read all that ever was writ on the other side, should be so apprehensive of a difficulty in the business, as to be moderate and modest in the censure of their Brethren, and not to degrade or excommunicate all that differ from them.

But some will Object, If there be as great a Necessity of Preaching the Word, as you mention, yet while Bishops are absent, or you cannot have them for Ordination and Jurisdiction, you should only Preach or instruct people in charity, as private men, but not undertake the work of the Ministry, what necessity soever there be.

I Answer : 1. The Church of Christ is little beholden to such Objectors, that would rather the Church should never have Ministers or Ministerial administrations, then have them without Bishops. 2. Do you think that private men may publicly Preach the Word, and that constantly, according to the Churches necessities ? why then may they not as well administer Sacraments. The Apostles had as special a Commission to Preach as to administer Sacraments. 3. Then if it be proved that succession of right Ordination is interrupted, so that no man can be found that hath had such a succession from an Apostle, and so is authorized to Ordain ; it seems you would have Christ have no Ministers nor governed Church on earth any more, till he send new Apostles. Or if the Preachers in *New-England* could convert all the *Indians* to the faith, and could not have a Bishop to Ordain them Ministers, you would have these Converts be without Ministers, Sacraments, Government, and Ministeriall Churches to the worlds end. 4. We were many of us Ordained long before the

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Bishops were down : and must we give up our Charges because they are down ?

Obj. But you may not Rule or exercise Discipline without them.

Ans. This is answered already. Further. 1. We do not exercise any Rule or Discipline that moderate Episcopal men do claim to be proper to the Bishop. We have only resolved to do the acknowledged duty of Presbyters. 2. But for my part I make no question but Presbyters may and must Rule their Congregations, by all the acts of Christs Discipline; even Excommunication and Absolution. 1. *Hierome* excepted only Ordination as the Bishops prerogative (what time soever he spoke of.) 2. Ministers are called Rectors and Pastors of their Congregations, by Law, and by Divines. 3. In their Ordination the Bishops said to them [Receive the holy Ghost, whose sins ye do Remit they are Remitted, whose sins ye do Retain, they are Retained.] 4. Almost all Episcopal Divines that I know of, do fully confess it. So Bishop *Downname* Defence of Consecrat. Sermon. l. 3. c. 4. p. 105. gives Deacons a power of Preaching and Baptizing, and Presbyters moreover of administering the Lords Supper, and remitting and retaining mens sins Yea Bishop *Usher* in his Answer to the Jesuites Chall. pag. 133. saith [In the daies not only of *Cyprian*, but *Alcuinus* also (who lived 800 years after Christ) the Reconciliation of Penitents was not held to be such a proper Office of the Priest, but that a Deacon in his absence was allowed to perform the same. The ordinary course that was held herein, according to the form of the Ancient Canons, is thus laid down by the Fathers of the third Council of *Toledo*: That the Priest should first suspend him that repented of his fault from the Communion, and make him to have often recourse unto Imposition of hands among the rest of the Penitents; then when he had fulfilled the time of his satisfaction, as the consideration of the Priest did approve of it, he should restore him to the Communion.) So *Usher*. It were easie to shew the concurrent Judgements of Episcopal Protestants for Presbyters Governing their Flocks; so be it, 1. That they contradict not the Bishop. 2. And that they allow the Bishop to Govern the Presbyters. But it would be tedious and needless. 5. Almost all Episcopal Divines that I know of (except one or two new ones of these times) do expound all these following Texts of Scripture, as spoken of Presbyters, *Acts* 20. 28. *Heb.* 13. 7, 17, 24. *1 Thes.* 5. 12, 13. *Tit.* 1. 5, 6, 7. *1 Tim.* 3. 2, 3, 4. *1 Pet.* 5. 2, 3, 4. And so do the Fathers expound them (though I say not all of them, *tantum de Presbyteris.*) See *Prins Catalogue*

p. 1, 2, 3. and History of Prel. Part 2. p. 315, 316, 317, &c. And for those that of late expound them otherwise, I doubt not but it is easie to discover their mistake, and withall how deadly a blow their interpretation giveth to their own Cause : but that I am resolved now to forbear such Disputes. 6. Church-Government by Pastors is but Directive, by expounding and applying Gods Word, and not Coercive by external force. And if a Presbyter may not Govern dire-ctively, then he may not Teach, and then he hath nothing to do. *Bellarmin.* distinguisheth of interior Jurisdiction *ad populum Christianum regendum in foro interiori Conscientie* : and exterior Jurisdiction *ad eundem populum regendum in foro exteriori* : and he cites *Abulensis Defens.* Part 2. c. 63. saying that the former power of Jurisdiction is conferred by God immediatly on every Priest in their Ordination : (*Bellarmin. de Pontif. l. 4. c. 22.*) *Spalatensis* hath largely shewed that the proper Ministerial Jurisdiction is exercised on Conscience : and *lib. 5. de Rep. Eccl. c. 12.* he shews that the Presbyter without the Bishop may so binde and loose, and keep from the Sacrament or admit to it : which he oft shews elsewhere, as to that interior power which is only on Conscience. Yea Cardinal *Cusanus, de Concord. Cathol. l. 2. c. 13.* saith plainly, *Omnes Episcopi & forte etiam Presbyteri, equalis sunt potestatis quoad Jurisdictionem ; licet non executionis : quod quidem exercitium executivum, sub certis positivis clauditur & restringitur, &c. unde cessante causa statuti illius, tunc cessant illa Jura positiva.* Though for my part, I think the term Jurisdiction is a great deal too big to be properly appliable to any Ecclesiastical, Ministerial Government. *Grotius* saith well, *de Imperio sum. pot. c. 8. p. 209, 210. Quod autem querunt nonnulli, habeatne Ecclesia Legislativam potestatem, id ex his que superius à nobis explicata sunt facile dissolvitur. Nam lege divina non habet ; Tò πορὸς τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ τοὺς ἱερεῖς, & sacerdotum non est νόμος ὑπερθεῖς, ut ante citavimus : quare que ante Imperatores Christianos in Synodis conscripta sunt, ad Ordinem aut Ornatum facientia, Leges non vocantur, sed Canones, habentque aut solam Consilii vim, ut in his que singulos magis spectant quam universos, aut obligant per modum pacti volentes, & nolentes etiam pauciores ex necessitate determinationis, ac proinde ex lege naturali, non ex humano aliquo Imperio.*] Yea a further power there is to give such Directions which Gods Law obligeth men to obey : but this is scarce properly called Jurisdiction. 7. As for those that say the Bishops are the sole Pastors, and the power of Presbyters is but delegate from them, and therefore they may do nothing without them, all Scripture that describe the Office of Presbyters

doth fully contradict them. The same God that set in his Church Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists, did also set Pastors and Teachers: and he will require an account of them, of the discharge of their Trust. If the Objectors doctrine were true, and we had none of us *Curam Animarum*, it were a glad doctrine to Presbyters, who might at judgement cast all on the Bishop, and a sad doctrine to Bishops, that must answer for all. And what wise man would then be a Diocesan Bishop when he must take the Charge of many thousand souls, that must wholly be committed to others instruction, and he himself shall never see their faces, nor hear their names. See this conceit of the Objectors fully confuted by *Spalatensis* (no rigid Protestant) *de Republ. Eccles.* l. 2. c. 9. 8. Papists themselves confess that when there is no Bishop the Government lieth on the Presbyters. 9. Who knows not (the Bishops confessing it) that in *Cyprians* time, and according to several Canons, the Presbyters joyned with the Bishop in Ordination and Jurisdiction? And if it were a Bishop with his Presbytery that did Ordain and Govern, then it is evident that the imployment is not aliene to the Presbyters place, nor above it: though they might not do it solely, because of the Bishops precedency, yet when there is no such President, it lieth all on them; see *Concil. Carthag.* 4. *Can.* 3. & 22. yea *Can.* 23. it is Decreed that *Episcopus nullius causam audiat absque presentia clericorum suorum, alioquin irrita erit sententia Episcopi, nisi Clericorum presentia confirmetur.* And for the Bishops power over Presbyters, it was so limited that the same Council ordains, *Can.* 29. that if a Bishop shall charge a crime on a Clergy man, or Lay man, he shall be put to prove it at a Synod. And *Can.* 30. If the Judges of the Church gave sentence in his absence, whose cause was tried, the sentence shall be void, and the Judges shall also answer at a Synod for their fact. And *Can.* 34. A Bishop sitting was not to suffer a Presbyter to stand. And *Can.* 35. The Bishop was to sit higher in the Church, but at home let him know that he is a Colleague of the Presbyters. And *Can.* 37. The Deacon must know himself to be a Minister or Servant, as of the Bishop, so of the Presbyter. Yea *Can.* 68. It is decreed that [*Ex penitentibus (quavis sit bonus clericus) non ordinetur. Si per ignorantiam Episcopi factum fuerit, Depohatur à Clero; quia se ordinationis tempore non prodidit fuisse penitentem. Si autem sciens Episcopus ordinaverit talem, etiam ipse ab Episcopatus sui ordinandi duntaxat potestate privetur.*] Here you see that one that is unjustly Ordained by the Bishop may be Deposed by the Clergy.

Clergy ; And why may they not Ordain without a Bishop, as well as Depose without him ? At least they that may Depose a Clerk without him, may reject or cast out an open offender of the people without him. And in the second Council of *Carth. Can. 10.* The cause of a Presbyter in criminals, was to be heard by six Bishops, and not less. And in the first *Conc. Carth.* a Presbyter is to be reprov'd of six Bishops, *Can. 11.* and a Deacon by three. And afterward when Bishops yet grew higher it was Decreed in *Conc. Carthag. 3.* (confirmed in the sixth general Council) that a Presbyter reconcile not a Penitent without consulting with the Bishop, except the Bishop be absent, or necessity constrain : So that in both those cases he might, though he had a Bishop over him. Yea it seems Deacons had some Ruling power in the Church : For the Council of *Elibert, Can. 77.* decree that [*Siquis Diaconus Regens plebem, sine Episcopo vel Presbytero, aliquos baptizaverit, Episcopus eos per benedictionem perficere debet.*] 10. The 38. *Canon. Concil. Elibert,* decreeth, That in case of Necessity a Lay man may baptize. And can the Objectors prove that Lay-men have in Scripture more power given them to baptize, then Presbyters to Ordain or Govern the Church ? 11. The 98. *Canon* of the fourth *Connc. of Carthage,* decreeth, That a Lay-man shall not dare to Teach, the Clergy being present, except they desire him.] Whereby it appears that in their absence, or at their desire, he might. Now I would know whether a Lay man have any better authority for such Teaching, then Presbyters have for Ordaining and Government ? 12. That Presbyters have Votes in Councils (which is the greater) our Protestant Divines at large have proved against the Papists. See *Dr Sutlive de Concil. cap. 8.* so very many more. 13. The Episcopal Divines do affirm that the Apostles themselves having planted Churches, and Ordained Presbyters in them, did retain the Episcopal power in their own hands. Now I would fain know, when *Paul* is so long in *Ephesus* and the adjoyning parts of *Asia* (above three years) and so long at *Rome, &c.* Who did Govern the Churches that-while, from which he was so far and so long absent ? Were they ungoverned ? or did another Bishop Govern them ? Or rather did the Presbyters, whom the holy Ghost had made their Bishops or Overseers ? And have not Presbyters now the same Office ? 14. I would know, if a Presbyter, as such, may not Ordain or Rule, whether to enable him thereto, and make him a Bishop, he must have a further Ordination ? If no : then it seems, that the first Ordination which made him but a meer Presbyter, gave

him the power, though the presence of his Superiour might *hic & nunc* hinder the execution : If he must be Ordained Bishop, I desire some proof of it out of the Bible : Where is there either precept or president, for Ordaining any man a Bishop, that was before Ordained a Presbyter ? If a Captain of a Troop, or Colonel of a Regiment, either die or be absent, the Lieutenant of the Troop, or Lieutenant Colonel of the Regiment, needs no new Commission or Authority for the Commanding of that Troop or Regiment, till another Captain or Colonel shall be chosen.

I must entreat the Reader to remember, that I am all this while necessitated to go upon the Grounds which the Episcopall Divines will own, and to cite only those Authours or Canons which are of force with them, because I am only proving that there is nothing in our *Worcestershire* Agreement that is contrary to their principles, or that must necessarily exclude a Protestant Episcopal Divine from our Associations. And therefore to argue against any of their opinions, would be contrary to my scope ; And to have cited *Calvin, Beza, Chamier, Pareus, Musculus*, or any of those multitudes of forreign Divines that are known to be against them, would have been labour in vain ; and so it would have been to have cited *Reynolds, Whitakers, Dr Humphrey*, and such like at home, who are some known to be against them, and some no fast friends to them.

If any after all this should require an account of my own judgement about the necessity of Ordination, I say, I am not now about such a businesse, nor do I account it seasonable to say any more then this : 1. God hath determined that every Church shall have a Pastor or Pastors. 2. And he hath stated the nature of their office and degree of their power. 3. And he hath described the persons that he will have to be the Officers by their requisite qualifications. All this is done in his Laws already. 4. There is nothing therefore left to be done but to determine which are the individual persons that are fittest according to Gods description. This God himself also will do, but hath not tied himself to one way in doing it : In generall, some sign of Gods will that this is the man must be had ; At first in calling the Apostles his own immediate nomination was the sign. Now the most notable sign is the most eminent unquestionable Qualification of the person, which when God conferreth so notably or discernably, that man must be taken as chosen by God, and they that reject him do sin : These Qualifications lie both in Abilities, Willingnesse, Conveniency of habitation, or other externals and interest in the people ; and if
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God bow their mindes to consent, there is the fuller signification of his will; yet lest any by intrusion should abuse the Church, God hath made the Pastors and Overseers, Judges of mens fitnessse; or the ordinary discerners of it, for the guidance of the Church in their consent. But then if these Judges or Discerners take a man to be fit (and so ordain him) who is utterly unfit, their ordination is *ipso facto* null, as being against Gods will; for God gave them power only to ordain those that were so and so qualified, and forbade them to ordain others. Also if the Qualification and fitnessse of the person be eminent; the people are bound to see Gods choice, and to accept that man of themselves without Ordination rather than an insufficient man ordained. For as Cyprian saith, *Plebs obsequens praeceptis Domini- cis & Deum metuens, a peccatore praeposito separare se debet, nec se ad sacrilegi sacerdotis sacrificia miscere: quando ipsa maximè habeat potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi; Quod & ipsum videmus de divina auctoritate descendere, ut sacerdos plebe praesente, sub omnium oculis deligatur, & dignus atque idoneus publico iudicio ac testimonio comprobetur, &c. Et sit ordinatio iusta & legitima quae omnium suffragio & iudicio fuerit examinata.*] That which I especially note is the first words, that God leaves neither Bishops at liberty who to ordain, nor people whom to choose, but hath so described to them the persons, that if they grossely erre, their action is null: and therefore the people themselves are bound to cast off a wicked, or utterly unfit Pastor, though all the Bishops in the world command them to receive them (as in the Arrians time some did) And on the contrary they are bound to choose the fittest against the Bishops minde, if he would thrust an unfit one upon them. And in such a case there is sufficient signification of Gods will that [This should be the man] and then want of Ordination cannot null his calling, if he had none at all: For where there is no place for controversie there is no need of a Judge: And where God eminently qualifieth one man, and leaves another utterly unfit, there should be no controversie which should be the man. And that Judgement which is committed to Ordainers is limited, and it is directed by Gods Laws, which it may not passe or contradict. If it do notoriously, the same Law commands the people not to obey man before God. Also this Power is given to certain ends: and if it be used against those ends, so that either the ends or that means must be forsaken, it is easie to see that it is means and not the ends. For the means are not alwaies the same, God having store if any one fail. Especially the means is of positive morality,

morality, and the ends of naturall morality : For when two duties come together, and both cannot be chosen, the choosing of the lesse (which must give place to the greater) is a sin : and Positives are lesse (*ceteris paribus*) then Naturals : And the substantials of Positives more necessary then the Circumstantials : It is of flat necessity that the Church be taught and guided, and God publicly worshipped : It is necessary that there be Ministers for that use. It is necessary that these men be godly, able and willing. It is fit that able Pastors be Judges who these be, lest unfit men creep in by deluding the people. But this is but in order to the former as the end. If therefore a Bishop or Pastor, or whoever shall appoint over a people an ungodly man, or an insufficient, this appointment is *ipso facto* null; and obligeth not the people : Nay, God hath already obliged them to worship him publicly, &c. and therefore they are bound to choose a man unordained to this work rather then not perform it : and in so doing they obey God in choosing him whom God hath designed, and he is a true Pastor. For as *Cyprian* saith; (*Ubi sup. Epist. 68. p. 200, 201.*) with the whole Synod; [*Desiderio vestro non tam nostra consilia quam divina precepta respondent, quibus jampridem mandatur voce cœlesti, & Dei lege prescribitur, quos & quales oportet deservire altari, & sacrificia divina celebrare, &c. Quæ cum prædicta & manifesta sint nobis, præceptis divinis necesse est obsequia nostra deserviant; nec personam in ejusmodi rebus accipere, aut aliquid cuiquam largiri potest humana indulgentia, ubi intercedit & legem tribuit divina præscriptio.*] So that in truth God doth all in conveying the Ministeriall power (as *Spalatenensis* proves of the very Magisterial) yea, he doth by his description and qualifications choose the person, and only require men to accept him whom he hath designed, by discerning and observing the signes of his Will in the nomination. And mark, that seeing all that God leaves to man is no more; therefore Ordination and Election do not so much differ as some think; both being but the Ministerial determination of the person : And therefore it being proved easily that Overseers of the Church are the stated Ordainers, it follows that they are the Principal Choosers; unless you will cross Scripture in making Ordination to be but a meer empty Ceremony. The people indeed must (*necessitate naturali ad finem*) consent; but that's not Election strictly. Or if they first propound the man, yet they do not Determine of him Authoritatively : that is the Church-Officers or Governours part : But if he cross Gods Word palpably by male-administration, the people have *judicium discretionis* (as

Davenant hath well proved, *de judice cont.*) and must discern their own duty, and not partake in a Pastors sin, nor obey him before God, so that this is neither to give the people any Authoritative determining choice, nor to exempt them from the Authoritative determining choice of their guides, except where their miscarriage makes it null: Much lesse to make themselves Church-Governours: No more then he makes an Army self-governours, that when they finde their Commanders Traitors, and see they would deliver them up to the Enemy, doth tell them they ought to forsake those Commanders in obedience to their Sovereign; and obey the next that is trusty, or (if none be so) choose another till they have further orders: Nay, it is hard trusting the guidance of that man again that hath once betraied us and the Church: And therefore those Bishops in *England* that set up Drunkards and sottish Readers, and cast out such as *Ames, Parker, Bains, Bradshaw, Brightman*, with multitudes, such as *England* was not worthy of; yea, that cast out the conformable so fast, as if they had presently been destroying the Preaching of the Gospel, I say, these have so apparently falsified their trust, that (if we were fully resolved for Bishops, yet) we cannot submit to them for Ordination or jurisdiction. The *Concil. Rhegicns.* decreed [*Ut perversi Ordinatores nullis denuò ordinationibus intersint*] Where then shall we have a Bishop to ordain of the old accused Tribe? Also they decreed [*De remotione ejus quem ordinare perperam duo presumpserunt.*]

But then who shall be encouraged or allowed publicly to preach without disturbance, of this the Magistrate is the Judge. Of the businesse of Election, see *Grotius* very right *de Imperio sum. Pot. cap. 10.* specially pag. 239. *Ne Plebi invite Pastor obtrudatur, & simul salvo summis potestatibus jure rescindendi electiones, siquid fortè in Ecclesiæ aut Reipublicæ perniciem erratum sit.* As *David, Solomon, &c.* did exercise such power: By all this it may be discerned that our Churches, Ministers, and Administrations, cannot by Papists or Seekers be justly questioned for want of succession of right Ordination; no, not though they had not had so much as a Presbyter at first to ordain them. And yet we maintain the usefullnesse and need of just Ordination. But I have been farre longer then I intended upon this Point.

The last Objection that I am to answer is this; Many of our people will not joyn with us, except they may have all Administrations as

formerly, according to the Common Praier-Book; especially except they may kneel at the Receiving of the Lords Supper. And some dividing discontented Divines do encourage them in that opinion and way.

To these I answer. 1. We have not in our Agreement meddled with those things, but leave every Minister to his own judgement in Circumstantials, only desiring that we may agree as farre as may be, and therefore that we will hear each others reasons; So that some that do associate with us do constantly deliver the Lords Supper to the people kneeling; who think it most suitable to the state of their flocks.

2. I beleieve there is no example of such a course of choosing Pastors in any age of the Church, for the people to agree with them before-hand to do as they would have them in every gesture or other circumstance, or else they will not own them or communicate with them.

3. It is contrary to the office of Pastors and duties of people. For they are to choose a Pastor to guide them, and not to be guided by them. Yet we acknowledge the people must not follow a Pastor in known sin. But then they must manifest it to be sin, Therefore I adde.

4. There is no Pastor among us but will be ready to give an account, and offer satisfaction to any of his people, concerning any miscarriage or male-administration. For we have engaged our selves to be so accountable before our Brethren of the Association. And if our people do rest on the judgement of other men, we shall be ready to debate the case with any man that they shall bring: Either to receive satisfaction, or to give satisfaction.

5. How impossible is it according to these mens principles to keep our Churches in Unity? For when many parties be of many mindes, and some will have praier on the Books, and others without, some will have one way of administration and some another, a Minister cannot please all: Either therefore they must yield that he be their guide in their worshiping of God, as to Circumstantials, or else they must break in peeces about every circumstantial difference.

6. Would you submit if all the Bishops had advised or required you to forbear kneeling at the Sacrament? If not, it seems you think it necessary of it self: If you would, then it seems you take it for indifferent: And should any for indifferent things reject the guidance of their present Teachers, and the communion of their Brethren, and the Ordinances of God?

7. I think there is no Pastor of our Associations but will be glad to condescend as far as conscience and duty will permit, for the satisfying of any that are truly conscientious, and therefore I doubt not but by speech or action they will easily satisfy them, when there is particular occasion: And more particularly, as some apprehend a necessity of sitting, because of the example of the Apostles, and other Reasons; and others think kneeling necessary for Reverence: I doubt not but all of us shall be willing to yeeld to the middle gesture of standing to any that desire so to receive; what further yeelding may be, I leave to every Minister to determine, according to the weight of the scruples of his people.

But if any will yet so insist on kneeling at the receiving of the Lords Supper, as that they will not joyn with Minister or people, except they may have assurance before-hand so to receive it, I shall give them my thoughts of their way in these few Questions:

Q. 1. Do not such make themselves or their leaders (on whose Authority they take up these conceits) to be wiser then the Lord Jesus and his Apostles? Christ thought it not necessary either to deliver it to his Disciples kneeling, nor yet to command that it should be so delivered. And these men it seems do judge it necessary.

Obj. Christ did not command all things necessary, but left some to the command of the Church.

Ansiv. Things of a standing necessity which ought to be practised by his Church ordinarily in all ages, Christ hath commanded. But things that vary according to the variation of times, places, persons, &c. he hath determined only in generall, and left the speciall determination to Church-Governours, to be varied as occasion requires; (As what time the Sermon shall begin, how long it shall be, on what Text, where the Congregation shall meet, &c.) Now I would know whether kneeling in the act of receiving have any necessity now which it had not formerly, even 1500. or 1600. years ago: Do any bring any new reason of its necessity? I know of none. The common reason is [We cannot serve God too reverently] And was not that reason as forcible then as now? both when Christ was visibly present, and afterward when the Church for many 100. years was possessed with as great a reverence of God as the highest pretenders now are.

Q. 2. Doth it not imply a deniall of Scripture-sufficiency to be the perfect rule of Faith and Life? the great point that differenceth the Reformed Churches from the Papists. For though it belong not

to the Rule (the Word of God) to determine of particular circumstances, which either need no determination or are to be determined variously according to the variation of occasions, (and therefore must not be fixedly determined by humane Laws;) yet doth it undeniably belong to the perfection of a Law to leave as little undetermined as may be, which needs determination; and therefore to determine of that which is of standing necessity: And who can give any reason why Christ should not have commanded kneeling at the Sacrament as well as a Council or Bishop, if it be a matter so ordinarily necessary as is pretended?

2. 3. Do not these men make themselves wiser then all the Churches of Christ for many hundred years after Christ? For it is certain, that for so long the Church used not to receive kneeling; Proved, 1. In that for a long time the Sacrament was received with their Love-Faests conjunctly. 2. For longer time the Churches would not so much as kneel in praier on the Lords Day; much lesse in receiving the Sacrament. Yea, they accounted it a hainous offence to kneel in praier, and made many Canons against it in severall ages. But some object, that as they did not receive kneeling, so they did not receive sitting: For it was standing, and standing was then a praier-gesture, and therefore we must receive it in our praier-gesture now.

Ans. 1. Will not standing now satisfie the Consciences of these men, when they think that all the Primitive Churches did but both pray and receive so? 2. When will these men prove what they affirm, that it was standing and not sitting that was the gesture then used in Receiving? Why, they say, because it was standing that was then commanded in the publique worship. *Ans.* But they should prove that it was in all worship: and not in Prayer and Praises only. How come so many Canons about the Order of Presbyters, Deacons, &c. sitting? Indeed they did keep the Lords day as a day of thanksgiving, as being in commemoration of the greatest mercy that the world hath received, even Redemption by Christ: And therefore partly in commemoration of his Resurrection, partly to avoid all signes of dejection (which were thought unfit on daies of Thanksgiving) they commanded standing in Prayer (not at Sacrament) as judging sitting too unreverent, and kneeling unsutable to the solemnity and rejoycing of the day: so that it was in opposition to kneeling that standing in Prayer was required. And therefore the same Councils forbad Fastings on the Lords day as a haynous sin, and many Fathers made it a mark of the true Churches and Christians.

not to fast on those daies : yea and Synods did Anathematize them that then fasted : *Ignatius* his severe censure against such is well known. And therefore they called the Lords daies, the Churches Festivals : And therefore also they forbad kneeling on any week day between Easter and Pentecost, which were Festival seasons. So that our Objectors will never prove that they Received standing : Or if they could, will it follow that it was because that was the Prayer-gesture ? I cannot stay to cite many Authors. Only thus much. 1. It appears by their Love-Feasts, at which they sate, that they did not stand in all the service of that day. 2. *Iustin Martyr* saith, *Apol. 2.* [After this we all Rise and offer Prayers, &c.] And is it not plain then that they sate before they rose ? and that standing was but the Prayer gesture in stead of kneeling ? 3. The injunction is expressly [for standing, and not kneeling] as opposite. I can shew them where it's said [*Die Dominico jejuniū nefas dicimus ; vel de Geniculis adorare, &c.*] *Tertull.* (if it be his) *de Coron. Milit. cap. 38.* Let them shew the like against sitting at the Sacrament.

But what if this had been so ? Had it not been as good an Argument to say, Standing was their Hearing-gesture : and sitting is ours : therefore we must Receive sitting because it is our Hearing gesture.] And is it not a better Argument then either to say [Sitting was their eating Gesture (and among them where Christ administred it, a homelier sitting then ours is :) and therefore we must take it in our Eating or Feasting gesture : as it's certain the Primitive Christians did.] It is therefore frequently by the Fathers called [a Feast.] *Tertull.* (*ad Uxorem li. 2. c. 4.*) calls it [*Convivium Dominicum.*] Yet will not we urge this better Argument to prove sitting Necessary (but give them that desire it leave to stand :) much less should they urge a plain sophisme for the Necessity of Kneeling.

Quest. 4. Do not these men destroy their own Cause, when they would prove the Necessity of Kneeling, from a Necessity of Conformity to the Universal Church ? Nay doth not this Argument shew a Popish heart ? For it seems they take not all or any of the Reformed Churches of *France, Holland, Germany, Scotland, &c.* who Receive sitting or standing, to be any part of the Universal Church. 2. If they take not the Primitive Church for many hundred years to be any part of the Universal Church, then they are worse then Papists. If they do, then may not we better argue [The Primitive Church did not Kneel in Receiving ; therefore we must not] then they can argue [The Church of later times did Kneel in Receiving : therefore

we must:] For even the Papists in matter of Tradition, do give precedency to the first Churches, and do make the present Church but the preserver and deliverer of the Traditions of the former: Is it not plain therefore that there is something else then the Authority of the first Churches that moves these men; when they cannot be ignorant that Christ and his Apostles and the Church for many hundred years did practice the contrary? Yea they that have written for Kneeling, maintain that there was never any command for it (to the people) no not in the Church of *Rome*; but that they suffered it to come in as a custom silently, that they might not be observed to contradict the old Canons against Kneeling on the Lords daies. Even as low as *Chrysostome's* time, it is but [An Adoration of Christ at the Sacrament.] that they prove. And who denieth that? We still pray to him before we Receive: Adoration and Kneeling are not all one: and Adoration by Kneeling is not all one with the doing this in the act of Receiving.

Quest. 5. Do not these men make themselves wiser then all the Bishops and Conformists in *England*, who did ever in their Writings and Disputings, maintain our Ceremonies to be things indifferent? And now they will esteem them so Necessary, that they will turn their back on Gods Ordinances, and become Separatists for them?

Quest. 6. Is it not the more inexcusable for these men to turn Separatists, and that on so small an occasion, as for a Ceremony or Gesture; in that they have both lived in an Age wherein they have so fully seen the mischiefs of Separation: and also have themselves spoke so much against Separatists as they have done? yea and still do; while themselves become the great Separatists, and so do but reproach themselves.

Obj. It is not we that Separate: but they that deny us the Sacrament Kneeling are the Cause.

Ans. So all the Separatists say, It is not long of them; and pretend that they are necessitated to it. But who is to be the Guide of sacred Actions? Minister or People? What if we should deny to give it to them that sit? Would you think that we gave them just occasion to separate? Judge by former times. And yet they have more shew of reason to say so. Besides, I have not seen any put away for Kneeling. But if they may approach the Table and take it with the rest, in what Gesture they please, yet this will not satisfie them unless also it be put into their hands: Though it is undeniable that

that Christ did deliver it to them all Generally and not to each mans hands; when yet he might more conveniently do it, when they were but twelve. And *Clemens Alexand.* (*Stromat. l. 7.*) saith [Also the Eucharist, when some, as the manner is, have divided it, they permit every one of the people to take a part of it: For to an accurate and perfect choosing or refusing (a mans.) Conscience is best.] I adde therefore,

Quest. 7. Is it not enough that they refuse themselves to be guided by their Guides in their own Gesture, but they must also needs Guide the Action of the Minister himself, or else they will separate? Should not he, at least, have the same liberty to administer according to his Conscience; as they expect in Receiving according to theirs? If his Conscience tell him, that he should deliver it but to the company conjunctly as Christ did, and their Conscience tell them they should take it Kneeling; why should not he be as much the guide of his own Actions, as they of theirs? If it were a duty to put it into their hands, it is his duty and not theirs; and therefore the not doing it, would be his sin and not theirs: and what need their Conscience therefore drive them from the Ordinance? else we must needs break all in pieces: For if we put it into every mans hands, then they that think we should do otherwise must depart.

Quest. 8. Do not they that would make more duties and sins then God hath made, forget that they have enough to do already? and that they are wont to think it too much that God himself hath commanded them? and that they will leave themselves at last more unexcusable for the neglect of the duties of Gods prescribing, when they could adde so much more?

Quest. 9. Should we not in doubtfull cases take the safer side? And is it not safer to do as Christ and his Apostles and his Church for many hundred years did, then to follow the novelties of later times? Is it not certain that where there is no Law, there is no transgression? and I know of no Law binding us to Receive kneeling: therefore for my part I cannot fear that Christ will condemn me for following his own, his Apostles and his Churches example, when he never gave me a word to the contrary.

Obj. If Christs example bind to sit, then you must also imitate him in doing it in an upper room, and but to twelve, &c.

Ans. 1. This Objection is nothing to our Question. For we be not affirming that sitting is Necessary, but that it is Certainly lawfull, and that Kneeling is not such a duty, as that men should refuse Communion

nion with a Church for want of it. 2. Both the known Reasons of the thing, and the after practices of the Church, do assure us that Christs administering in an upper room, and but to twelve, and not to women, were all occasionall and mutable; and the Churches did otherwise: But for a Feasting gesture there is no such proof.

[*Obj.* But we are bound by the Canons of the Church which are still in force.

Ans. 1. Scripture is the Churches sufficient Rule, and the perfect Law of God. 2. Those things that Scripture hath left to occasionall determination, no Councils must make standing Laws for to bind at all times. For if such Laws had been fit, God would have made them. 3. It is the present Guides of the Church that are upon the place, and see the occasions, that must determine such Circumstantial as are of mutable determination. And former Church-Governours can no more take away the power of the present, then they can deprive them of their Office; it being essentiall to the Office of every Pastor to be a Guide or Ruler of his Flock. 4. If you think that all Church-Canons (yea though it be General Councils) bind, then you are bound to Contradictories: for one Council hath oft crossed another. And Papists themselves disclaim many things enjoined by Canons. The 16. Canon of the 4. Counc. of *Carthage*, requires Ministers not to read the Books of Heathens: Doth this bind now? Many the like might be mentioned. 5. If you will needs take your selves bound by Canons, I pray you tell me whether the Canons of a few Bishops in *England* of late, should bind against the Canons and constant practice of the Primitive Church, and of the Apostles themselves? They forbid Kneeling on the Lords day; and the Apostles practised sitting at Sacrament; and either our late Canons are Null for contradicting the former which were of greater authority; or else neither are binding. 6. According to their own grounds, our Bishops had no power to make Canons, both because they were no Bishops, for want of a successive true Ordination, and because they had made themselves incapable. Even the matter of our Bishops Election, according to many Canons, made them incapable of ever being Bishops more. The fourth Can. *Concil. Aurelian.* Decrees, not only that the Clergy and people must consent, but that if their consent were but forced (or they inclined) by the oppression of those in power, that Bishop should be deposed *for ever*, as coming in more by violence then by lawfull Decree.] Now how our English Bishops came in, I had rather their friend *Grotius* should tell them
then

then I (though we all know that neither Clergy nor people had any hand in it, but a little ceremonious formality of the Chapter) *de Imper. sum. potest. cap. 10. pag. 319.* [*At posteriori a vo tota electio Regi reddita. Hodie penes Capitula Imago est electionis: vis tota penes Regem. Nam vacante Episcopatu, Rex cum codicillis, licentiam eligendi continentibus, simul transmittit nomen ejus quem eligi cupiat.*] About which he cites *Burhill, Bilson, &c.*

1. The Doctrine of *Grotius* against a Legislative Power in the Church, you heard before. The Doctrine of the Church of England you may finde, *Articl. 6. & Art. 22.* The words are these [Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of the faith, or to be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.] And *Art. 22.* [When (General Councils) be gathered together, for as much as they be an Assembly of men whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God, they may erre, and sometime have erred, even in things pertaining unto God: Wherefore things ordained by them, as necessary to salvation, have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared, that they be taken out of holy Scripture.]

It were tedious to cite what Protestant Episcopall Divines say to this point. I will only cite one, *D^r Sutlive de Concil. l. 2. c. 3.* Where he laies down this Position, [*Non omnia conciliorum decreta de sacris Ecclesia ministris, & eorum Officiis Ecclesiaeque Ceremoniis & Ritibus, Christianos necessario ligare.*] *Prob. 1. Non ligant quae novas instituunt Dei colendi formulas, &c. At in actis Conciliorum multa sunt ejus generis decreta. Quis ergo Christianus contra Christianae libertatis leges eis se obligari sinat? 2. Non ligant, idque multo magis, quae repugnant verbo Dei, &c. 3. Non erant imponenda leges onerosae super cervices Christianorum, Mat. 11. Act. 15. Hujusmodi ergo onerosas leges excuti posse, nemo non videt. 4. Christus nos liberavit à servitute traditionum & legum humanarum, &c. cujusmodi plura conciliorum sanctionibus firman- tur. 5. Omnia in Ecclesia ad edificationem fieri debent. Si ergo aliqua Conciliorum statuta scandalo sunt Christianis, tolli debent. Si laqueum, injiciunt conscientiis, dissolvenda sunt. Si inutilia esse deprehenduntur, & minime decora, abjicienda. Neque sane dubium est quin Ecclesiae Romanae Canones de Ceremoniis, & Ecclesiae Ministrorum calibatu, & hujusmodi, valde sint captiosi & onerosi & inutiles. 6. Mores Ecclesiae Christianae ostendunt omnia Canonum decreta licet alioqui justa non sem-*

per ligare. Atque hoc ex multarum legum enumeratione videre licet. (See the instances.) 7. *Patres Ecclesie non omnia Conciliorum statuta pariter servabant.* (See the proofs.) 8. *Ipsa Synagoga Romana, licet alios ad statutorum suorum observationem astringere cupiat; priscorum tamen Conciliorum statuta non servat.* 9. *Ratio docet, mutanda esse vel quæ non decet, vel non profunt, vel quæ onerosa & captiosa esse incipiunt, &c.*] So far Dr *Sutlive*. Much more might be said to this Objection. Some will marvel that I say so much to these men. Let such know that I am not of their minde that despise all the Episcopall men, as fitter to be rejected then united with. Many of them are Godly and Learned and Judicious, and deserve the chiefeft room in our Associations. I was desirous also to save the ignorant from the danger which I foresee.

Left any should misinterpret what I have here said, against these Popish Objectors, I here profess, 1. That it is far from my intent to raise any jealousies of any pious Episcopall Divines, as if they were Popish. I speak of no other, but that late Generation of *Cassandrian, Grotian* Papists, who think they can do *Rome* more service under the name of Protestants, by drawing men to Traditions and Divisions, then if they should declare themselves *French* Papists. I have partly told you how to know them. They will dispute as zealously as a Protestant against the Popes Infallibility, and his being above a General Council, but they can consent to his Primacy, and most of his Doctrines, especially against the perfection and sufficiency of the Scripture.

2. I do not speak against mens seeking a Reconciliation with *Rome*, on just and honest terms: I think it one of the happiest works in the world, could it be accomplished: And I think the *French* are the only people to be first dealt with to that end. And I long to see providence so turn things about, as that there might be a Council first of these two Nations for the attempting of such a work. And I am past doubt, that it would be the happiest way to pull down Antichrist (if the Pope be he) that hath been yet of late undertaken. But, if ever such a thing be accomplished, it must be by Uniting in one Creed, as containing all things sufficient to salvation; which must be wholly taken out of Scripture, and not such as the *Trent* Confession is: Upon which Agreement they may openly acknowledge each other for Brethren and true Churches, without compelling each other to Uniformity in the lesser matters, but bearing with each others differences.

rences. I wish *England* such Rulers as will faithfully prosecute such a Pacifick enterprise, without sinfull compliance, and betraying of the Truth. Though I confess, when I consider their Principles and Practices, I am afraid Bishop *Hall* is in the right, that There's no Peace with *Rome*: Yet no fears must hinder men from any just and necessary Enterprize.

3. I solemnly profess that I have no desire by this our Associating, to advance any parties, or carnall Interests; but meerly that all godly, faithfull, Orthodox Ministers, may join together, to guide their Flocks in these licentious daies, lest through our Divisions they be made a Prey. And also that so much of Discipline may be Unanimously exercised as we are all agreed in, lest our Congregations be a reproach through their pollutions; and men should forget the true nature of Christianity, and we have all laid wast, or overgrown with weeds, while the hedge lieth down. Nor do I pretend to an ability of assuring the world, whether Episcopacy, Presbytery or what else is the right way of Government: though I am more perswaded every day, that the Truth must be gathered from the several parties, who each of them hold a part of it in peculiar. But my conceits in these matters, I have no call to open to the world yet, which I perceive not likely much to regard them, as perhaps they do not deserve it.

Lastly, Understand that it is not only those that differ in Government that we desire should Unite with us: but also those that differ in Doctrines, so they be such as can heartily subscribe our Profession, and will manage their differences in Peace and Love. I need not name any parties, seeing it is discernable by our Agreement, whom we do intend.

Only let all know, That the Able, Godly, Faithfull and Peaceable of all these sorts, we heartily desire to unite with as Brethren: but the Insufficient, Ungodly, Unfaithfull, Unpeaceable, we do disclaim, of what Opinion, Side or Party soever they be.

I shall conclude with this humble Request to all my Brethren in the Ministry, In the Name of our great Lord and Master, that they would forget all former injuries and differences so far, as presently to addresse themselves to seek Peace and Reconciliation: And to that end that they would here and in all Countreys presently enter into some fraternall Associations; and there meekly and self-denyingly to set themselves with one heart and soul to carry on Christs work so

far as we are agreed. Why Sirs, have not Independents, Presbyterians, Episcopall, &c. One God, One Christ, One Spirit, One Creed, One Scripture, One hope of everlasting life? Are our disagreements so great that we may not live together in love, and close in fraternall union and amity? Are we not of one Religion? Do we differ in fundamentals or substantialls? Will not conscience worry us? Will not Posterity curse us; if by our divisions we betray the Gospel into the hands of the Enemies? And if by our mutuall envyings and jealousies and perverse zeal for our severall conceits, we should keep open the breach for all heresies and wickednesse to enter, and make a prey of our poor peoples souls: Brethren, you see other bonds are loosed, Satan will make his advantage of these daies of Licentiousnesse: Let us straiten the bond of Christian Unity and Love, and help each other against the powers of hell, and joyn our Forces against our common Enemy. Have you not had yet time and means enough to observe how God hath been offended with your unpeaceable proceedings? seeking to oppresse and subdue each other by force, rather then to win each other by love and Evidence of truth? The Episcopall party when they were up, making that sad havock of the Church by the persecution of their brethren, which this land is like to lament yet longer: The Presbyterians when they were up, seeking their ejection too rashly, without sufficient means of satisfaction; What should I rip up the faults of others which the Sun hath seen, and the world rings of? Truly Brethren I speak it that we may all be humbled, and go weeping together in seeking the Lord with our faces Zion-ward, saying, Come, let us joyn our selves to the Lord in a perpetuall Covenant that shall not be forgotten, *Jer.* 50.4,5,6. I would not open our shame, were it not necessary to our humiliation and reformation: But the world knows it already. As God tels us of it, so the railing, malicious, insulting enemies tell us of it. Have not some of you so led the way in secret or open vilifying, deriding, contemning and aspersing your brethren, that thereby you, even you, have been the means of raising those calumnies that you cannot alay; and have put those words into the mouths of the wicked, which they daily belch forth to the pleasing of the devil, the grieving of all lovers of holinesse and peace, and the undoing of their own souls, so bitterly and scornfully have used the name of an Independent, that the most Reverend, and Learned, and godly of that way, do with the multitude lie under such contempt, that they are the lesse capable of succesfull serving God in their places; so reproachfully and contem-

temptuously have others used the name of a Presbyterian, that they have raised by it that scorn in the multitude of seduced ones, which will prove a snare to many a soul, and which these Churches may have cause to bewail while there is a tongue to mention it. Yea, some have ventured into the Throne of God to search the hearts of a Nation, and in such auditories, and with such language to proclaim their pretended discoveries, as I am ashamed to expresse: and when they have done to print it, that there may not be wanting a witnesse of their sin. Alas, it is past deniall, that you have occasioned those hellish reproaches, which the Satanical *Mercuries* do daily proclaim in the ears of the world; So that a man of another Nation cannot reade the reports of Civill or Military affairs in *England*, or *Scotland*, but he must reade it intermixed with the Accusations, Reproaches, and Slanders of the Brethren. I will not now go so near the quick, as to meddle with matters of bloud, even the bloud of confessed Saints, in which we little thought ten years ago, that such should have had a hand, as have openly owned it to God and men: Only I will say, These things must sit close to some mens consciences: But this I would seriously have you consider, whether the fearfull danger that the Gospel and Christian cause is in this day, be not principally occasioned by your divisions, emulations and contentions? And if it should fall out (which God prevent), that Academies and Ministry be cast down, that Popery be let in, that the power of godlinesse be swallowed up by schismes and prophaneesse; Will not your names be the first in the curse? Who knows not that the divisions of the Pastors leade the people into divisions? yea, and that they are as backward yet as almost any to heal them? In all this I exclude not my self; Though I can truly say, that I alway loved peace, and hated censorious dividing; yet I unfeignedly bewail (and confesse my sin before God and the world) that I did love the one and hate the other no more, that ever I did so much against peace and no more for it. O Brethren, it's we that leade the way to division that must sound the retreat, and jointly leade the way to reconciliation. We have no other way left to heal our wounded consciences, and hide our sin and shame (under Jesus Christ:) We have no other way to revive the hopes of the Churches, now they seem to be ready to gasp their last; nor yet to rescue the souls of our poor people who are some of them ready to turn Papists, as soon as liberty hath opened the door wide enough for the Priests and Jesuites to be familiar among them: and the rest of them are ready to think all Religion to be uncertain, or vain, while

they see so many. In the name of God Brethren, return, and speedily and zealously return to Unity and Peace: Send abroad to one another, and stir up the dull, and invite the backward, and draw on the prejudiced and negligent to this work. Alas Brethren, it is greater, more difficult, and more blessed work, then to be done with idle wishing and sitting still. Have you forgotten your Masters sheep-mark? [*By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples if ye love one another:*] Have you forgotten the Spirits charge, *If it be possible as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men, And Follow peace with all men?* To receive it when it's thrust upon you is not following it, and yet happy *England*, if all would do so: Alas, that ever men, that men that make so much conscience of praying, hearing, reading, Sacraments, should make no more conscience of their duties for the peace of the Church? When Christ hath so frequently, so plainly, so piercingly inculcated, Love, Peace, over and over, as he hath done, and yet that Christians, yea, Ministers do so strangely overlook them; and reade them as if they read them not: When the Lord hath placed so much of the very nature of Christianity in it, and made it so necessary to our very salvation, that yet we should passe it over so lightly, and with so little observation: O what hypocrisie! what self-condemning is it for to cry out of the divisions and schismes of the times, as most do, and when we have done to sit still when we should endeavour to heal them, and when we that have made the breach should make it up. Division and want of love is a sin that all men are ready to blame in others, and exclaim of in the generall: and yet that we should be so deeply guilty our selves, as if we had not run far enough in the guilt already: Alas Brethren, are not the effects of our sinne before our eyes which way ever we look? into City, Countrey, into Parliament that late was, and into the Army, into men of all sorts and degrees? and is it not time to return? Again therefore, I beseech you make out after Union and Reconciliation. And to that end get all together, and keep constant meetings in Associations. Most jealousies and jarrings are occasioned by strangeness and distance; When you hear men spoken evil of, and do not hear them speak for themselves. Familiarity would much further the cure of differences: Devils and wicked men can agree in evil doing, and goe hand in hand in sin; and shall not we unite in the work of God? What, we! that look to live in heaven together, and there to be employed all in one blessed work of praising the living and most blessed God? Will it do you good then to remember your strangeness and dissensions

tions now? For my part I daily look death in the face, and live in a constant expectation of my change, and therefore have the better advantage to be faithfull to my conscience, and I must needs professe that when I look back upon my life I have more comfort in the least means that ever I used for the Churches peace, then in all my most zealous contentious Engagements. I am confident Brethren, you scarce know the work that will more comfort you in the review, then to be speedy and diligent in the using of your wit, strength, power and interest for the Union and Reformation of these distracted Churches: Shall it be said (alas, too truly) that Separatists will ride and run and lay out all their pains unweariedly to divide the Church, and that we will not do half so much to heal it and unite it? Our office is to be builders, and building is conjoyning, and demolishing and destroying is dividing. I confesse it is a work of exceeding difficulty, to bring even the best to be of one minde: We are of such various intellectuall complexions and statures, and all so imperfect in knowledge, and they that do know are so unable to convey their knowledge to their prejudiced, unstudied, unprepared brethren, or to make such impression on other mens understandings, as is necessary to their conviction, that it is no wonder if Agreement be a difficult thing. Besides, mistakes once received do so insinuate into the very will, and do so strangely multiply, and engage men before they are aware to maintain them, and error (as all sin) is of such a deceitfull nature, seeming to be the best when it is the worst, and alwaies coming under the pretence of its contrary, and the great deceiver is so skillfull and diligent, to set out his wares to the best advantage, that it is no wonder if the Churches Teachers be perverted. Besides this, men are of such difference in the strength of their naturall parts, and also do so differ in the advantages of improving them, and some study so hard and some so little, that it is no wonder if there be almost as many mindes as men. Some also have such passions to pervert their understandings, and some have such strong temptations and carnall interests, and so many false hearts are ready to creep into the best Assemblies, that it is no wonder if dividing be easier then uniting. Yea, (which is the core of all our misery) there is in most of us so much pride and false estimation of our own conceptions, that it is not the smallest difficulty to convince us of our ignorance, and to make us know how little we know; yea, such proud spirits will quarrell with the light, because it came not originally from their candle; and let the choicest discoveries be sent from heaven to them, they will

contemn them because they are brought them by another mans hand; and if the only way of Agreement be propounded by another, they will cavill or dissent, or envy it because themselves were not the motioners or authours. There is no agreement with those men where pride is unmortified : For be they never so unable or unwilling to do the work themselves, yet will they hinder another in doing it. But Brethren, the more difficult this work of agreement is, the more industriously and resolvedly should we set our selves to seek it. Difficulties that amount not to Impossibilities, should quicken and not discourage, where the work is of necessity as ours is. I seriously professe that I often wonder how men, learned men, godly men, can maintain so much seeming peace with God, and their own consciences, who do so little for the Churches peace : and how they can ever hope to die in peace that study no more to live in peace ? If without holinesse here there be no hope of holinesse or happinesse hereafter, how can there be any hopes of everlasting peace to those that do not here value and pursue peace ? What ! Preachers of the Gospel ? and yet forget their Masters name ! [*The King of Salem, the Prince of Peace,*] and forget the Gospels nature and title [to be, *The message of Peace* ;] and forget their own office which is to be [*The Messengers of Peace,*] and forget the title of that way which they must preach [*The way of Peace* ;] and forget that it is the description of the wicked [*The way of peace they have not known* ; and to forget that it is their curse [*There is no peace to the Wicked* ; and to forget that great benediction of our Lord, [*Blessed are the Peace-makers,*] yea, and to forget the tenour of our finall sentence [*They shall enter into Peace* ;] and the nature of our everlasting inheritance, what absurdities are all these ? how inconsistent with that calling which we professe and do pretend to ?

But I know there is none of us such enemies to peace, but we would be content to have it so it be upon our own terms ; If all men will take up their opinions, and stoop to their wils, what men so wicked but would yield to peace ? But is that seeking for it, and denying our selves for it, and closing in Christ, the common center ? All that I will say more to you, shall be in these following Prognosticks, which do also intimate the impediments and difficulties, and do point out our own duties.

In generall, I am confident if this be Gods season for the restoring of his Church, it will be his season also for the uniting of his people : And let all the dividers know, that they labour in vain while they
think

think to restore the Church by any other means then the loving, amicable closure of the members: Nay, they demolish and destroy, while they dream that they are building; *Sion* is not built by the *Babel*-confusions, If God divide our Language he will blast our work.

More particularly I do foretell you that (for the way to peace)

1. Whenever God means to restore and build his Church in peace, he will open the eyes of his people to see the necessity, excellency, and glory of peace, and give them such deep apprehensions of this, that they will wonder that they were before so blinded as to overlook it.

2. He will (to that end) make them reade more seriously and with observation those Texts of Scripture, which before they slipt over and felt no force or favour in: so that they shall wonder how they could so overlook such serious precepts, and such clear discoveries of their Masters will: such as *1 Cor.* 1. 10, 11. &c. and 3. 3, 4. *Rom.* 16. 17, 18. *Phil.* 3. 15, 16. *1 Thes.* 5. 13, 14, 15. specially *Rom.* 15. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. and 14. 1. &c. *1 Jam.* 3. 17, 18. *1 Cor.* 12. 12. &c. *Mat.* 5. 9. *Gal.* 6. 1. *Rom.* 12. 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18. to the end. O that these few verses of this Chapter were but conscientiously practised even by the eminent Leaders of the Flock of Christ.

3. When God will do this great work, he will wonderfully convince his people of the sinfulness of their divisions, and of that perverse emulation and zeal which they were wont to entitle God himself to, and to glory in as a part of their chiefest duty: They shall no more reproach one another, and lie vilifying their Brethren behinde their backs, and one say [It's all long of these Independents,] and another [This we may thank the Presbyterians for,] and a third [The Prelaticall Conformists did all this: But they shall see that we were all too blame, and every man shall acknowledge his unpeaceable miscarriages, and heartily lament them before the Lord, and loath themselves for all their emulations.

4. Yea, when God will do this work, he will make his people feel an indispenfible obligation lying on them, to seek peace, and pursue it; so that they shall be no more able to rest with quiet consciences till they have sent to one another, confessed their miscarriages, and desired reconciliation and constant Associations for the unanimous carrying on the work of Christ, then now they can rest in peace of conscience without Preaching, Praying, or any other duty.

5. Yea, God will possesse them with such a Love to Peace, and

such a fervent Zeale for it, that they shall set themselves with all their might to obtain it; and they that now can hardly be drawn to accept of it when it is thrust into their hands, shall then follow it as thirstily and importunately, as the most zealous dividers are now set on the propagation of their opinions, or rather as the most zealous godly Preacher doth thirst after the winning and saving of souls: And as the zealous Reformers in *Luthers* daies were set against Popery, and the zealous Non-Conformists in *Queen Elizabeth* and *King James's* daies, and also before this late Parliament were set against Bishops and Ceremonies, so that they restlessly prosecuted their work till it was accomplished, so shall the Restorers of the Church be as zealously set for the Reconciling of differences, and the union and association of Pastors and of Churches.

6. Yea God will raise in his people such deep apprehensions of the hainous wickedness of dividing principles and practises (which are now accounted acts of piety) that they shall not make a light matter of them any more: But Christians shall think and speak of Divisions and Emulations, and breaking into parties, as now they think and speak of Theft, Whoredom, Murder, or such like.

7. Yea God will cause his people to detest the very Names of Division, and lay them by as occasions and badges of our disagreement. And I think *Epiphanius* and *Austin's* and others long Lists of Heresies will not be in so good esteem as they are at this day. For though the schisme will be more abhorred, yet it will not be every such difference in Judgement, as some of theirs, that will be taken for a sufficient ground to call a man a Heretick.

8. Moreover, when God will restore his Church, he will give meek and humble spirits to his people, and take down much of that pride which now causeth and continueth our Divisions: Those proud men that now value their Reputation and carnall interests before the Churches Unity, and Reformation; that so value their own understandings, that they think contemptuously of other mens; shall then be low in their own eyes, and prefer their Brethren before themselves. The pride of Christians, especially of Ministers, is now the main impediment to our Union: This cursed sin makes men look with an envious eye at every Brother that is esteemed above them, and (as they think) doth cloud them in the eyes of the people: It makes Ministers seek after applause, and makes them impatient of slighting and disesteem: And while they are striving who shall have the greater party, they are engaged in Division before they are aware: For-

getting

getting that (while they think they are labouring for Christ) they do but fish for themselves, and draw men from Christ by drawing them from Unity. It is this pride that makes men so froward in carrying on any work of God, that unless themselves may have the glory of it, or it may be done their way, they will quarrel and break it all in pieces: as if they had rather Christ had no Church, then themselves should be denied an honourable station in it: or as if they had rather Christs work should be undone, then done without them, or contrary to their conceits. God will turn this devilish distemper into humility and self-denial, when his work shall be done. He will make his people base in their own eyes, and glad to be slighted, vilified and laid by, so it might but conduce to the Unity and Peace of the Church, and the furthering of Reformation. As *Clemens Roman. ad Corinth.* faith, pag. 69 [He therefore that is strong, mercifull, full of charity among you, let him say, [If it be for me, that Sedition, Contention and Divisions arise, I will depart, I'll be gone whither you will; I will do what the people command me, so be it that the Flock of Christ may live in Peace with those Presbyters that are set over them.] He that shall do this, will win himself much honour in the Lord; and every place will gladly receive him.]

9. Yea God will cause men to abhorre that censoriousness of their Brethren, and those secret desires to destroy their reputations, which are the fruit of this Pride. So that they who now are questioning every mans sincerity that doth not please them, and making the worst of every mans actions and speeches, shall then cover mens infirmities by that charity which thinketh not and speaketh not evil, which envieth not, and is not puffed up: And they shall be so conscious of their own faults and frailties, as that it shall constrain them to tenderness and compassion on their Brethren, and to judge the best till they know the worst; and they shall learn to bear a censurer and backbiter with as much indignation as now they hear a swearer or a liar.

10. Yea God will take them off from all their engagements to parties, and let them perceive that the very names of parties are a dishonour to the Church; and that Christians should not think of a party, but as a man thinks of his wounds; with smart and sorrow.

11. Also when this blessed work of healing shall be wrought, God will shew his people the sinfulness of that zeal for inferiour particular opinions (true or false) which makes them think that they ought to do many things against the Churches Unity and Peace. He

will shew them that it is a perverse zeal which chooseth the propagation of a smaller point, before the edification of the body, and the propagation of the substance of the Christian faith; which by that course is apparently hindred.

12. Yea God will open their eyes to see the difficulties of those lower Controversies which they insisted on, till their high confidence in their opinions be abated, so as that they shall pity themselves and the rest of mankind, for our unavoidable darkness and weakness; and not contemn, cast off, or divide from those that differ from them.

13. For God will let men see that it is the substance of Christianity that Christians must Center and Unite in; and he will teach them to take those for Brethren that hold that substance, though they differ in several inferiour things.

14. And God will teach his people to be hereafter less cruel and proud, then to impose new Articles of faith upon their Brethren; and to put their own Interpretations into their Creed: He will teach men to be more mercifull to the Church then to load her with Canons and Constitutions of men, containing unnecessary dividing determinations; and seeking to force all to their obedience.

15. For whenever God intendeth Peace and Unity to his Churches, he will cause men freely to give his Word the honour of its sufficiency, and to take it for a perfect Rule of Faith and Worship; as that which hath left nothing undetermined which was fit for a stated universall determination: And therefore men shall see the vanity, yea the sinfulness of mens undertaking to determine by Canons what God thought not fit to determine in his Laws: except only for the occasional determining of that in particular which God hath determined only in generall, and directed man by his Rules how to determine in special: which therefore must not be by a fixed universal Determination (for then God would have done it himself) but by a temporary determination, to be changed as occasions shall require; and therefore in most things to be left to the particular Church-guides, who are upon the place, and imployed in the work. Also God will teach men to take the Scripture for sufficient in matter of Belief: and to screw men no higher, not adding their supernumerary Articles, as the Council of *Trent*, no nor putting a word among their Fundamentals as necessary which is not in the Scripture. What hope of Union when there is no Uniting Rule or Center agreed on? And can the Papists, or any other over-doing zealots, imagine, that
ever

ever Gods universall Church will agree upon any Rule or Center as sufficient besides the Scripture? or ever depart from its sufficiency?

16. Lastly, If God intend Peace, he will (likely) fit his providences to advantage it. He will give preparing seasons and accommodations. Three great disadvantages to the Churches Peace and Unity, are these that follow. 1. Times of Warre; when mens ears are filled with a contrary sound, and their mindes alienated, exasperated, and filled with jealousies. If men do think that in any foreign Churches there be any thing amiss; how much more Christian a course were it, and probable to succeed, to debate the case in peace, then to fight with them? 2. It is an unlikely time for agreement, when one party is in prosperity and power, and thinks he can have his will without condescending to a loving Christian debating of our differences: Mans proud corrupt heart, will hardly be taken off from the using of his carnal weapons and advantages: but will think that God puts such power and opportunities into his hand, for the promoting of his particular opinions and waies, by force; and not by satisfying the unsatisfied. 3. Another disadvantage is, ignorant or wicked Magistrates in the Sovereignty: who either understand not the waies of the Lord, or else hate them, and would undermine them; either, as *Julian*, by giving every party a liberty of contending, and of publishing their delusions, and denying openly the Foundation; and working on the poor people, who are usually easilier taken with confident speeches then with solid reasonings: Or else (on the other extream) to use a foolish violence, with those that dissent in inferiour things; and to become a discouragement to true piety and tendernefs of Conscience. The later we have felt formerly; the former we have felt lately; and fear yet more. But what God may yet do upon this change of our Government, we cannot tell: Let all that love the Churches Peace and welfare pray, That our Rulers may avoid these two destroying extreame, of giving *too much* Liberty, or *too little*.

You see, Brethren, there's many things to be done, and great changes to be made on the hearts of the best, before the Church of Christ is like to be restored by Unity and Peace. Yet God can do all this in a moment, when his time is come. O set to the work, that we may see that our deliverance is at hand. I think you have now as fit a season in one respect, as ever you had: When you had the advantage of superiority and secular Power, your ears were stoppt, your hearts

were hardened, you thought you had a speedier way to settlement, then by satisfying Dissenters, and condescending to those Brethren, whom you were readier to contemn. But now God hath either laid you all under hatches together, or left you no assurance of your carnal advantages. Those Martyrs could agree in the Prison, and at the stake, that differed about Ceremonies in their prosperity. If God give you not hearts to hearken to this counsel, and Agree now; I shall expect to hear that you are brought much lower, and conjoyned in that misery where you shall be forced to agree; and then you will look back on your proud Divisions with shame and sorrow.

I do therefore in the Name of Christ intreat, not only the people of this Congregation to Unite; but all the Godly, Able Ministers in this County to Associate with us; of what Party soever they have been. And I do let them know, that we are not so settled in our present Opinions, or Waies, but that if they see any thing amiss in our Agreement or our courses, we shall be ready to hear any thing that can be said for our Information and alteration. And if the zeal for their own Parties and Waies should keep them off, let me advise them to be more zealous for the welfare of the Church in generall, and *to take heed lest our divisions do prepare our people for Popery, or fasten them in ungodliness:* and I dare assure them, *That if Episcopacy, Presbytery or Independency, &c. be indeed the Way of God, then is no Way in the World so likely to set it up, as the Uniting and loving Association of the Pastors; Where all things may be gently and amicably debated.*

And I desire that our Brethren in other Counties would take the same course: Not that I dare urge them to unite just on the terms of our Propositions or Profession, if they have better before them. Yet I will say this: That I admire Gods good providence in facilitating our consent herein, so happily in this County: and that it will be found, upon trial, a matter of great difficulty, to bring even Wise and Godly men to agree on the drawing up of Forms: and I seriously profess, that if I had known where to have found but this much done to our hands, I would not have consented that any of us should have attempted to draw up a new and different Modell; but have the more gladly received it, because the Union would have been more full. But as soon as we see our own weaknesses or mistakes Corrected by any more perfect Way of our Brethren abroad, we shall accept their Instructions, and Correct them our selves. In the mean time, we shall rather do thus, then nothing.

Finitur Maij 2^o 1653^o.

Postscript.



Postscript.

I Am urged to adde to what is written, a few words of Advice to the People of those Congregations whose Ministers refuse to Associate. Either such Ministers are Insufficient or Scandalous, or they are (or seem) Able and Faithfull. If the former, I advise all conscionable people to endeavour speedily to cast them out, and not think of joyning them with us who cannot receive them. I know some will plead compassion to them; but it's cruel compassion, which for fear of bringing a mans family to poverty, will both connive at his proceeding in such hainous guilt, and at the starving, and everlasting damnation of mens souls. The devil loves such mercy as this is. If indeed you pity such, help them, if you can, to a sight of their sin, in undertaking so high a Calling, and so great a Charge, which they are so unfit for: that they may break off their sin by Repentance, and betake themselves to a work that they are fitter for. *Obj.* But may not Ministers, as well as others, be forborn upon their Repentance? *Ans.* 1. Repentance will not cure their Insufficiency. 2. It must be a very notable Repentance that must at all (much less suddenly) readmit a scandalous person into the Ministry. In the Primitive Churches, after hainous sinning, they would admit him to the Ministry no more, were he never so penitent, though they would admit him to Communion. However, let him be cast out of the Ministry, and Repent then; and if he manifest such Repentance as may satisfie the Church, let them then take him in again, there or elsewhere: But shall he therefore be trusted in his forfeited Office, where he may wrong mens souls, because when he is questioned, he pretendeth Repentance? *Obj.* But how can any other conscionably receive his sequestred maintenance, when by Law it is his? *Ans.* Is it not given him only as Pastor, for the Work of Christ, and the service of the Church? If there be 200^l *per annum* allowed to each City for a publick Physician, and some ignorant Empericks get into the place, who kill more then they cure, were not he cruelly mercifull that would have these men continue to the murdering

dering of poor people whom they pretend to cure? and were not he wickedly and hypocritically just, that would say, No man else may take the stipend, it belongs to these? If an ignorant man that is wholly unacquainted with Seafaring, should get to be the Pilot of a Ship of Warre, or of richest lading, would any be so madly mercifull or just, as to let him alone to the drowning of himself and all that are with him, for fear of putting him out of his place, or giving his maintenance to another? I will give such titular Pastors better advice: and that is, That they would lament day and night, as long as they live, the heavy guilt of the blood or damnation of souls which they have incurred, and that so far as they are able, they would make the Church restitution of the Tithes which for so many years they have so unjustly received; it being, before God, but plain Robbery; and one of the most hatefull kindes of Robbery that can be imagined; to starve and destroy mens souls, and then to take hire for it. But enough of them.

2. But if the Ministers that refuse to Associate cannot be proved Insufficient, or of wicked lives, then I would advise all their Peaceable Godly people, to joyn together, and desire their Pastor to Associate with his Brethren for a Unanimous carrying on the Work of God. If he yet refuse, he will no doubt, give some reason of it: Which if he do, his people may do well to desire him, to meet once, at least, with the Associated Ministers, and give in his Reasons to them. This they should desire, both 1. Because the people may there hear both sides speak together, and so be the better able to judge, whether his Reasons for Dissent be sufficient or not: and 2. Because Christianity and common charity binds that Dissenting Brother to manifest to the rest what he judgeth to be their Errour, and so great an Errour that he dare not Associate with them. And it is not a sudden appearance, and slight casting in some superficial Reasons, that must satisfie his Conscience, or satisfie his people: but it must be a fair and full Debate of the whole business; such as may be apt or sufficient for a manifestation of the Truth. If after this the dissenting Pastor will not yet Associate; the People (having been present and heard the Debate) may be the better able to judge, whether the grounds of his Dissent be tollerable or intollerable; and accordingly they may know how to carry themselves to him. Where note, that I can give no people a particular direction before hand, that will fully reach all such cases; seeing they are so diversified by circumstances. And therefore I would have all such people as have a Minister

Minister that declineth Union and Association with his Brethren, to desire the Advice of that Association of faithfull Ministers who are next him; who will be best able to advise them when the case is known: In the mean time, common Reason requires that People should hear and obey such a Pastor with more jealousy then if he were in Union with his Brethren. 1. Because the judgement of one man is not to be valued before the Judgement of many as Godly; unless it be fully manifest that he is of more painfull studies, and a stronger Judgement then all those are. 2. Christ doth so plainly and pressingly require Unanimity, Accord, and Association of Brethren, that he that will refuse this so plain and great a duty, may well be suspected the more in the rest of his Doctrine. 3. It is more probable that that man means to play the Pope and tyrannize over the Flock, and make himself Lord of Gods heritage, who will do all alone, singularly or on his own head; then he that doth all in Unity, and is ready to give an account of all his doings to the rest of his Brethren; and to hear what they can say against him.

But perhaps you will ask, What if we cannot get our Pastor so much as to come to the Associated Ministers to give in his Reasons of Dissent? I answer, Then try whether he will entertain a Debate with some one or two that they shall send to him. If he will not do that neither, it is too probable, that he is so Proud or Ignorant, as that a People should be jealous how they trust him with the guidance of their souls. But yet I would not have such rashly to reject him, but first advise with the next Associated Ministers.

Quest. But how shall we judge, if he do come in, whether his Reasons be of weight or not? *Ans.* Partly by what you hear replied to them (and therefore do not content your selves to hear them from himself alone) and partly by the evidence that they carry. He that will prove it his duty not to Associate, must prove that there is some sin which that Association would engage him to. If there be any such sin, it is either something unlawfull to be subscribed in our Agreement; or something to be necessarily done in practice. Hear him therefore manifesting and proving either of these. I can foresee the vain cavils that some are like to use, by the experience I have long had of the Separatists arguings. First, Perhaps they will tell you we have such and such bad Ministers among us in our Association; and here they will aggravate all the faults of such as they except against, as if they were notoriously graceless. To this I would desire the Hearers to return these Answers. 1. That we have agreed to reject

reject from our Society all that are of known Insufficiency, or Ungodliness, or Unfaithfulness in the main work. And if any one get in among us, that is guilty of any scandall, which we were never sufficiently acquainted with, we judge it no more our fault, then it is the fault of a Church that an Hypocrite is in it, or a sinner that none accuseth. 2. We had rather of the two erre in judging too favourably, and permitting some in our society that are less fit, then in judging unrighteously, and rejecting the faithful servants of Christ. No Society hath all the members of equal integrity, and beyond exception. 3. Desire those Brethren that Object this but to search their hearts and waies, and remember what may be said against themselves, and cast the beam first out of their own eye; at least to censure, as humble men, that are sensible of their own miscarriages and imperfections; and how much allowance the best must have, that they may pass for currant. 4. Tell them this, which I think, may give them full satisfaction: If they have any charge against any member of our Association, let them bring it in, and they shall be fully heard, and we will reject all whom they shall prove fit to be rejected. Can they desire more? Will men of any Conscience or face of common honesty, let fly at men behinde their backs, and not bring in their charge to their faces, and hear them speak for themselves: Yea and withdraw from a Society meerly because of the presence of such, whom they never accused to that Society? Would they be thus dealt by themselves? If we have bad members, might not their presence who are better, do more then their absence to remove them, or hinder them from doing any hurt? 5. Take heed lest out of your own mouthes you be condemned; while you acknowledge that even bad men are forwarder to Reformation and Unity then you.

They will perhaps further tell you, that we do but make a shew of Reformation, and we leave all or many ungodly ones still in our Churches; they are even common Parish-Churches, composed of the common multitude, as they were before.

Ans. This I have answered sufficiently already: Further I say, 1. No mans mis-practice is any reasonable cause of excepting against our Agreement: The Propositions which we subscribe doe exclude as many as I can finde any Scripture warrant for excluding. If the Objectors deny this, let them give their reasons against the Propositions, and not against any mans practising contrary to them. Would any wise man say, I will not subscribe Propositions for Reformation,

mation, because such a man will not reform exactly that doth subscribe them? As if he should say, I will not consent to the Law against swearing, because such a Justice doth not punish Swearers. 2. Before they withdraw for any mans personall fault (in permitting unfit members in his Congregation) they must admonish that person and convince him of his fault, yea, and convince that association of their fault in not casting him off, or else why should they divide from an Assembly for one mans male-administration? Or if all be guilty, they must be dealt with as in case of other sins, before they be rejected. If I know some of the Congregationall way that admit unfit persons into their Churches, shall I for that refuse communion with them and others of that way. 3. We are not to reject any member from our Church-communion that desires it, without sufficient cause produced against them. Let these Objectors therefore name the particular persons who have been proved unfit, and yet been retained; and not for shame, speak of our retaining Parishes, multitudes, the ignorant, the ungodly, &c. in generall, when they name no particulars. As if we must therefore condemn and punish men as ungodly, without any accusation, meerly because they are many, or because such men clamour out generall reproaches: The multitude of members is one part of the honour of Christs Churches, as the purity is another.

These Objections I therefore here answer, that people may know, they are not sufficient to warrant any Minister to withdraw from Unity. And again I do advise all godly people to consider, that it concerneth them to know the reasons of their Ministers dissent, and to be well satisfied in them: For else 1. They may be guilty of encouraging and following him in a Division. 2. It is the Churches as well as the Pastors that must be linked together by these Associations, and therefore seeing it is by the Pastors that they must (principally) preserve that Union and correspondence, the withdrawing of the Pastors, tendeth to the dividing of the Churches themselves. 3. They cannot safely trust their souls under a dividing Pastor. And let them but observe when all pretences are taken off, whether with many these prove not the true causes of withdrawing? 1. Some men are conscious of so much ignorance, that they will not joyn with Ministers, where there is like to be any trial of their parts, for fear of being shamed upon the disclosing of their weakness: In a Pulpit they may possibly seem some body; but they will not endure a closer trial. These men would do well to learn, that Christian honour is not got

as other honour is, by contesting or subtill contriving for it: but by an open and humble confessing of weakneses: He that will needs be greatest, shall be least: and he shall be greatest that will be the lowest and servant of all. He that will save his honour shall lose it: Pride is the greatest shame among Christians. For my part I value the youngest learner that is humble and diligent, above a hundred of these close hypocriticall Rabbies, that have nothing but big looks and contempt of others, to cover their ignorance.

2. Others you shall find, that will withdraw and divide in meer pride of their own supposed godliness, and censoriousness of others, as unworthy of their fellowship: These are the worst of all: So contrary is it to the true nature of Christianity to be proud and censorious, and to say to our Brother, Stand by; I am more holy then thou! What sin hath our Master more rebuked and shamed then pride and censoriousness? There is no obscurity in those plain commands: *Judge not, that ye be not judged: Who art thou that judgest another mans servant? to his own Master he standeth or falleth: Why dost thou judge thy Brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy Brother? We shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. Let us not therefore judge one another any more,* &c. *Rom. 14. 4, 10, 13, see Gal. 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.*

If these men be godly indeed, they will be so humbly conscious of their own unworthiness and great imperfections, that they will be readier to draw back on that account, and say, I am not worthy to be Associated with Christs Ministers: rather then to say, Such a one is not worthy to joyn with me: (except he will come and prove him indeed one fit to be rejected.) And truly in my experience, they prove none of the best men themselves, nor furthest from exception, who are so ready to condemn their Brethren as ungodly. How oft have I heard one man accusing his Brethren as men void of grace, or thus and thus faulty: and within a few daies, heard others as deeply accusing him, for pride or covetousness, or ignorant, careless Preaching, and negligent, disorderly, rash, empty performance of Gods work; as a man that doth but disgrace the work of Preaching, and make men loath Gods Word, through his ill managing of it. Thus frequently do I hear men accused on both parts: Alas, that men conscious of their own weakneses, should not forbear such vilifying of their Brethren! Perhaps one may excell in judgement or solidity, and another may excell in zeal and diligence: Must each therefore despise or reject the other? He is a rare man that is generally excellent.

3. Others you will finde will divide, meerly to fit themselves to parties, or to serve a thriving side, against the unity of the Church : These Pastors, if known, are unfit to be owned.

4. Others will hold off, for fear of displeasing their ungodly Parishoners, by this exercise of Discipline that we have agreed on : especially if their maintenance lie in the peoples hands : These servants of Mammon are unfit for Christs service. I confess it is a great temptation to men that have a Family to maintain, to cast themselves on a way that may lose their Maintenance. But is he fit to teach others the doctrine of Christianity, Self-denial, taking up the Cross, parting with things present for the hopes of future, &c. who will openly contradict it all himself?

Quest. But put case that the people are satisfied of the Ministers Reasons for withdrawing?

Ans. Both he and they must faithfully propound those Reasons to the Associated Brethren : 1. Else how can we that erre be rectified? 2. If they hear not both sides speak, they may easily be deluded, and satisfied in their sin.

But a greater difficulty occurs then any of these. What if a Congregation have the choice of their Pastor, and they cannot agree in choosing, but one party will have one man, and another party will have another? How will your Union be carried on, when the people cannot agree about their Teachers? *Ans.* I confess I foresee a sad calamity like to befall the generality of the Churches in this point, if God do not wonderfully prevent it. For I finde it such a difficulty to have many men of one minde (even of the best) that I can hardly expect that ever the people should long agree in the choice of their Ministers : especially if they have divers propounded that may seem fit. For the Ancient experienced, or meeker sort of Christians will be for a man of Solidity, Judgement and Peace : The younger and the more rash, unexperienced Professors, will rather incline to a man of Zeal, who is inclined to Divide, and under pretence of further Reformation, to fall into unwarrantable separating waies. And usually, such unexperienced people are untractable, and will have their way, be it never so wrong : For passion quite perverts their judgement : and that passion is often indulged rather then suspected, because it goes under the name of Zeal. You will have also carnall superstitious persons, setting in for a man of their own stamp, to humour them ; and so how many parties may there be? Especially if publique Maintenance be taken down, and people allowed to main-

tain whom they please; then most great Congregations will be (in all likelihood) divided into two or three parties. Or if men grossly erroneous, and intollerable, should by Rulers be put in the publique Place, and so the best people forced to separate (which I strongly fear) in all these cases our Union will be difficult. Yea, if people grow into a dislike of their Pastors; and one part would cast him off, and the other would continue him: Or if there should be two Ministers together, and part of the people should cleave to one, and part to the other. What now should be done in all these cases? I answer, It is not hard to tell what should be done: but it's hard to bring even godly men to do it. I will premise this Prognostick, That I have little hope when I have said all, to prevail with either the wilfull, self-conceited superstitious party, or the rash youth, whose Zeal doth carry them beyond all sober, considerate, judicious proceedings. But for the sake of the rest I will tell them what must be done.

- I. First it must be Resolved on, That the Church must not be divided. And therefore in all debates, keep that Resolution firm. And that Minister or party that is for Dividing, do but discover a strong ground of suspicion, that their Cause is the worst. All true Pastors and Christians will be so tender of the Churches Unity, that they will try every preventing course, and wait and suffer much before they will yield to the Division of a Church. *Obj.* But if we must either consent to an unfit Pastor, or Divide, it is not long of us, but of the rest. *Ans.* There are several degrees of fitness and unfitness: If he be one that is utterly incompetent and intollerable, then you must use all right means to keep him out: and if you cannot prevail, you must further do, as I shall anon acquaint you more fully. But if he be one that is competently fit, though with many imperfections, you must do your best to have a better, but rather accept of him than Divide. The Reason is plain: God hath flatly commanded Unity, and forbidden Division: but he hath no where forbidden the Accepting of a weaker competent Pastor, to prevent such division. God hath not yet provided enough for every Church of the Abler sort, (alas, how few are they in comparison of the rest that yet are honest and tollerable!) If therefore all the weaker must be cast off, then the farre greatest part of the Churches must be unchurched, or be without any Pastors.

- This therefore being first Resolved on, *That the Church must not divide*, you must secondly take this as certain, that *God hath not put it in the power of the people alone, to determine who shall be their Pastors,*

except

except in case of Necessity, where his ordinary Way of Determination doth fail.

This is so fully proved by many others in Writing already, and it is so contrary to my intended brevity to insist on such points, that I shall say but little.

Observe carefully the difference between Election, Determination and Consent: Choosing or Electing sometime signifieth only The first Nomination of one person of divers that be offered, though yet there may be no Power finally to determine, whether that Person shall stand. Sometime it signifieth the said Nomination with Determination also. To Determine is Authoritatively and finally to decide the case, and set down, who the man shall be. To Consent, is but to be Willing to have that man who is Elected or Determined of.

Now I affirm 1. Gods Word hath left it undecided, whether the people shall be the Electors, so as first to nominate the man that shall be their Minister, or not. The Apostles chose two for Judas room, and left God to take one by Lot. The Apostles required the Church at Jerusalem to choose seven men for Deacons, as supposing them acquainted with their lives; and as being loth to put any upon them, in that Office especially, which medled with money matters. But for Elders (for all the shew from *Act. 14. 23.*) there is no command or any thing equivalent, that the people have the Nomination.

2. The Power of Authoritative determining who the man shall be, is clearly in Scripture denied to the people. For it is appropriated to the Church-Rulers, under the name of Ordaining. For *ordino* used, *Tit. 1. 5. Act. 6. 3, &c.* signifieth an Authoritative appointment, which is not a meer useless Ceremony (as some make Ordination to be, that necessitate the Ordainer to lay hands on him whom the people Elect) but comprehendeth the Determination that this must be the man. For my part I believe that it is the Church-Guides or Ordainers that have the sole Authoritative Determination, and the people have the full and free judgement of Discretion, to judge whether the Ordainer have rightly determined, or not. But if that should be otherwise, yet still it is evident that ordinarily the Ordainers have a Negative voice; and that the Church cannot take to themselves a Minister without them: Or else it would follow, either the Church-Rulers must Ordain whomsoever the people nominate (which is not to be imagined) Or that the people may take them Ministers unordained (where Ordainers may be had) which is as vain a conceit.

Note also, that it is not only to the Office of the Ministry in General that Ordination is Necessary; but also to the fixing of Ministers to particular Charges. The Apostles Ordained the seven Deacons, as appropriate to the Church of *Jerusalem*: and Ordained them Elders in every Church, *Act. 14.23.* and commanded *Titus* to Ordain Elders in every City, *Tit. 1.5.*

Observe also, that though there be some controversies whether this power belong to a fixed Bishop, or General Minister, as the Apostles, or to a Presbytery, or to a single Minister of that same Church (if there be any left;) yet all are agreed that it belongs not to the People. Conclude of this therefore that the People (alone at least) cannot justly determine who shall be their Pastor.

3. Yet the Determiners or Ordainers must have the peoples Consent, ordinarily. Because the Ministeriall power compels not to obedience by outward violence: And therefore Consent is of naturall Necessity to the peoples actuall obedience. If a man set a Steward over his Family; the rest of the servants are bound to obey him, whether they chose him or no: but yet because they cannot be made to obey him against their Wils, a wise Master will chuse such a one (if fit) whom the servants will soonest consent to: So if a man be to send his sons to the University, he will not tell them that it is in their own power to choose themselves a Tutor; but himself will do that; and command them to obey him. But yet because they can never learn against their wils, therefore he will not (ordinarily) force them to a Tutor whom they will not consent to, if others may be had: (Though perhaps he may urge them to consent by some sharp words or dealings.) So that the Ordainers should please the people as far as may stand with their welfare, and no further.

These things being thus laid down, let me for Application, tell you,
III. Thirdly, That when a Church is at variance about the choice of a Pastor, or determining who shall be the man, *they are bound to seek the advice and determination of Church-Guides*: For seeing it belongs to them to Determine, whether there be difference or no, (by Ordaining;) they must especially be sought to when there is a difference.

4. If the Ordainers or Ministers determine of a fit man; you must stand to the Determination; though perhaps another might be more fit. If the man by them determined of, be utterly incompetent; you must first prove it to them, and (if that serve not) appeal to some more General Assembly, or seek further to men more unquestionably Judicious and faithfull then they are.

5. If the people will not thus be satisfied, the refused Minister must remember his duty, and not offer, without order and authority, to make himself the head of a dividing company.

6. If he will not obey, he is to be admonished by the Pastors of that Association, and to be Avoided and Rejected, if he be obstinate.

7. If any passionate part of the Church will stick to that man, the rest that fear God must admonish them, and if they be obstinate, avoid them, according to *Rom. 16. 17. Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them: For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies: and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.* I have seen this verified in the issue, of some that I durst not so have thought of in the beginning. Poor inconsiderate, unexperienced Christians little know what they do, when they take part with dividers, and encourage them in division. They do but strengthen their own snares. Such men fish most for themselves, even when they think themselves they are more zealous for Christ than others.

8. Were there no other remedy, rather then the Church should divide, they should (after solemn seeking God) let God himself determine it by a Lot, as *Matthias* was chosen.

If you once fall a dividing, you will give the worse part such an example, that they will presently choose themselves Teachers that will please them, and leave but few to hear or maintain a pious Ministry.

8. If the Church-Guides be so corrupted, that they all conspire to force on the people unsound, insufficient or ungodly men, then the people may reject them: (as *Cyprian* adviseth them) of their own accord; as being left destitute of Christs orderly Remedy.

9. What hath been here said of the first case, may suffice to determine the other cases. If a people have two Ministers, and some would adhere to one and reject the other, and the rest adhere to him and refuse obedience to the former; in this case they should all take the advice of the neighbour Associated Pastors: For, though it be disputed, whether such Associated Ministers have any Regent Authority over a neighbour Church, yet all agree that they should be consulted and heard in order to Unity; and that's enough to the business in hand. If they can prove their Ministers fit to be ejected, let them there prove it. All Christians are bound to be accountable to

their Brethren, in such offensive actions, as have a face of division or disobedience. If both the Pastors in question be approved of, then the Associated Ministers should advice the people to lay aside their carnal sinfull contentions (which the Church of *Corinth* was so plainly chid for) and to close with both, 1. Because two Ministers are far fitter to Guide a Church (specially if great) then any one alone: Yea should one of them be but weak, and the other more able: a weak hand will afford some help. 2. It is the Scripture way to have more Elders then one, and if they reject their Pastors, and supply the room with private men, they will, likely, have weaker then they reject. 3. It is not in the peoples power to reject one that is already their Teacher: except when he is utterly intollerable, and all orderly means for his ejection do fail. Prove from Scripture that any people may else reject or depose their Minister. 4. Much less may a lesser part of a Church do it, when the greater dissenteth: no nor a greater, because it tendeth to division.

If the people are unruly and will not agree; the neighbour Ministers must admonish both the said Pastors, and charge them in Christs Name that they avoid Divisions, and that themselves do heartily and lovingly close and entertain no motion to division from the people: and that will break the peoples dividing purposes, if the Pastors be but resolutely against it, and do not secretly foment it (as commonly they do.) If either of the Pastors be resolved for Division, and reject this admonition; the godly people are bound to suspect that man, and to admonish him, and not side with him; seeing it is usually the true mother that would not have the childe divided: and an ill sign when men draw Parties and Disciples after them. And the neighbour Ministers are to admonish such a man, and proceed with him as he receiveth or rejecteth the admonition. Many differences in Judgement and Practice must be tolerated among Brethren to prevent dividing: but dividing it self is not to be tolerated: (except where the cause is just; which must be a great necessity.) What should be done with those particular persons, that will own but one of the Pastors, and yet will joyn with the whole body of the Church, which acknowledgeth both, I will not now attempt to advise; because it will be fittest to do it according to the quality of the persons, their reasons, their carriage in the business, &c. all which may much vary the case.

If it appear, that the people reject or disown a Minister for private grudges, or for crossing them in their opinions or old customs

in things unnecessary, or worse, those people must be the more sharply dealt with. Much more, if it be for crossing them in their sin, or telling them the truth. But in case a Minister have by weakness or passionate speeches, or neglect of his duty, given just offence to his people, yet the fault be not such as to cast him out: then the neighbour Ministers must advise him, humbly to acknowledge to the people his weakness or miscarriage, and to promise his faithfull endeavours to reform: and if any persons remain passionately unreconcilable to him, they must be the more born with (so they drive not to a division) because he gave them so much occasion of offence. No humble man can violently prosecute another, for being too violent against his faults: but will rather submit to it, as Gods afflicting, humbling, reforming rod. And it's two to one, but after some experience of his more holy, harmless, diligent behaviour, those very people will own him, that did disclaim him.

Lastly, If all remedies fail, let one of the Pastors depart, and say, Let him take the living childe undivided: And the better man will likely be the readiest to do it; according to that I before cited out of *Clem. Roman. ad Corinth.*

Let none wonder that I speak so much on this subject: For if the Scripture were conscionably observed, men would take Church-division for a greater sinne then Adultery or Theft. Mutinies and Divisions do more infallibly destroy an Army, then almost any other fault, or weakness: and therefore all Generals punish Mutineers with death, as well as flat Traytors. I confesse ten or twelve years ago, I wondered oft to finde both Scripture, and almost all the voluminous Writings of the Fathers in every age, to be so filled with exclamations and argumentations against Church-dividers and Hereticks: But now I know a little better the reason of it; and how prone, even Godly, Zealous men (especially young unexperienced Christians) are to it, and of what desperate consequence it is. Our Union is our strength and beauty: Commonly they that Divide for the bringing in of any inferiour Truth or Practice, do but destroy that Truth and Piety that was there before. I like not him that will cure the Headach by cutting the Throat. No Master, no Law, no Profession was ever more mercifull, gentle, meek, more for Unity, Love and Concord, then the Master, Law and Profession of Christians. O that the Lord would speedily arise, and stirre up in all his people in the world, so mighty a Zeal for Unity

and Sanctity, that those blessed Twins might conjunctly flourish, which thrive so ill when they are divided: and that the true Saints of Christ may once taste that sweetnesse which such a blessed State of the Church would afford! However, the friends of Peace and Holinesse shall taste of it, Reade *James* 1.13. to the end. 1 *Cor.* 1. & 3. *Heb.* 12.14.

F I N I S.







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